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**THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS
OF
BRITAIN;**

*Book 417
1795*

**OR, AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF
ABUSES IN THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE,**

**IN
Europe, Asia, and America.**

FROM THE REVOLUTION IN 1688, TO THE PRESENT TIME.

**THE WHOLE TENDING TO PROVE THE RUINOUS CONSEQUENCES OF
THE POPULAR SYSTEM OF**

TAXATION, WAR, AND CONQUEST.

~~~~~  
"THE WORLD'S MAD BUSINESS."  
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POLITICAL PROCEEDINGS

BRITAIN

CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS

TO THE PRESENT

BY J. H. BURNETT

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS

TO THE PRESENT

1891

THE HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE First Edition of *The Political Progress of Britain* was published at Edinburgh and London, in Autumn, 1792. The sale was lively, and the prospect of future success flattering. The plan was, to give an impartial history of the abuses in government, in a series of pamphlets. But while the author was preparing for the press, a second number, along with a new edition of the first, he was, on the 2d of January, 1793, apprehended, and with some difficulty made his escape. Two booksellers, who acted as his editors, were prosecuted; and after a very arbitrary trial, they were condemned, the one to three months, and the other to six months of imprisonment. A revolution will take place in Scotland before the lapse of ten years at farthest, and most likely much sooner. The Scots nation will then certainly think itself bound, by every tie of wisdom, of gratitude, and of justice, to make reparation to these two honest men, for the tyranny which they have encountered in the cause of truth. In Britain, authors and editors of pamphlets have long conducted the van of every revolution. They compose a kind of forlorn hope on the skirts of battle; and though they may often want experience, or influence, to marshal the main body, they yet enjoy the honour and the danger of the first rank, in storming the ramparts of oppression.

The verdict of a packed Jury, did not alter the opinions of those who had approved of the publication. Five times its original price hath, since its suppression, been offered in Edinburgh for a copy. At London, a new edition was printed by Ridgway and Symonds, two booksellers, confined in Newgate, for publishing political writings. They sell the pamphlet, and others of the same tendency, openly in prison. It is next to impossible, for despotism to over-whelm the divine art of printing.

A copy of the first edition was handed to Mr. Jefferson, late American Secretary of State. He spoke of it, on different occasions, in respectful terms. He said that it contained, "the

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“ most astonishing concentration of abuses, that he had ever heard of in any government.” He enquired, why it was not printed in America? and said, that he, for one, would gladly become a purchaser. Other gentlemen have delivered their opinions to the same effect; and their encouragement was one cause for the appearance of this American edition. In preparing it for the press, a multiplicity of new materials presented themselves to the recollection of the writer. Hence the introduction hath swelled to more than its former size. By indulging this habit of enlarging, as he went on, the author has found it impossible to re-print the whole of the original pamphlet, as he at first designed. When he came to examine his performance at the distance of two years, he saw many topics of importance that had been but slightly touched; and whatever related to his native country, he was anxious to make as perfect as possible. Instead, therefore, of correcting an old work, he has, in a great measure, formed a new one; but he has avoided any mention of facts, or any reference to publications, posterior to the date of the original Introduction. A mixture of this kind would have confused his narrative; because, since it was first written, the internal state of Britain hath undergone a very great alteration. The scene is varying every day; and on a subject so complicated, and, at the same time, so fluctuating, he cannot, at the distance of a thousand leagues, write and delineate with the confidence of an eye-witness. He might also, with probability, have been suspected of partiality, had he attempted to touch on a subject, wherein he was so personally interested; and where he might have forgot that decorum of stile and sentiment, which the public are entitled to demand. The history of the two last years, is, therefore, entirely passed over; and the reader is here presented with a kind of original ground-plan, of those follies and crimes of government, which laid the foundation of a British, and in particular, of a Scots insurrection. This little volume forms a general introduction to the perusal of those trials at Edinburgh, for Sedition, that have been printed, and to those others,

others, for high treason, that will possibly be soon printed in the United States.

The work was at first intended for that class of people who had not much time to spend in reading, and who wanted a plain but substantial meal of political information. The facts are, therefore, crowded together as closely as possible. All the coquetry of authorship has been avoided. The ambition of the writer was to be candid, unaffected, and intelligible; because, truth is the basis of sound argument, simplicity the soul of elegance, and perspicuity the supreme touch-stone of accurate composition.

A report was circulated, and believed, in Scotland, that this production came, in reality, from the pen of one of the judges of the court of session. The charge was unjust. His lordship did not write a single page of it; but he said openly, that its contents were authentic, and unanswerable; and that the public were welcome to call it his.

For the extreme rashness of his original plan, the writer cannot offer an apology that prudence will accept. A short story may, perhaps, convey the motives of his conduct. In 1758, the Duke of Marlborough, with eighteen thousand men landed on the coast of France. The troops, when disembarking, were opposed by a French battery, which was immediately silenced; for it consisted only of an old man, armed with two muskets. He was slightly wounded in the leg, and made prisoner. The English asked him, whether he expected, that his two muskets were to silence the fire of their fleet? "Gentlemen," he replied, "I have only done my duty; and if all my countrymen here, had acted like me, you would not this day have landed at "Cancalle."

PHILADELPHIA, November 14, 1794.

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

A THIRD EDITION of *The Political Progress of Britain* is now submitted to the public. Since the appearance of the second, in November last, a pamphlet has been published, entitled, *A bone to know for the Democrats, or, Observations on a pamphlet entitled, The Political Progress of Britain*. The author is offended at my presumption in having predicted a Scots revolution. The multiplied disorders in the government itself, seem alone sufficient for putting an end to it. Two years have now elapsed, since the war began with France. The experiment has already cost Britain at least sixty thousand lives, and between the augmentation of her public debt, the capture of her merchant ships, and the bankruptcies produced by the various calamities of war, at least sixty millions sterling. For the expences of a third campaign, she is contracting a debt of twenty-four millions sterling; and of this sum, six millions are to be bestowed upon Francis the Second, that the fighting machines of Germany may be led, or driven, to a twentieth defeat. The following paragraph in a London paper, of the 29th of April, 1793, demonstrates how incapable Britain is of such convulsive exertions.

"According to Lord Rawdon's affecting statement, in his new bill, there are no less than *twenty thousand* debtors, *one thousand three hundred wives*, and *four thousand children*, now in confinement." The number must at present be supposed far greater.

The Public Ledger, of the 21st of June, 1793, advances one good reason for the alacrity of George the Third, in commencing this war.

"The hundred thousand pounds, for which a treasury warrant has been granted, as part of the subsidy for the Hanoverian troops, has been added to the two millions, seven hundred thousand pounds, already placed in the funds, in the name of the Lords of the Regency of Hannover."

This is a ministerial newspaper. Thus we learn, that this
amiabile

amiable monarch sells the lives of *one* part of his subjects, for the money of another. In the present tempest of political disquisition, it is not possible that such a system as the British constitution can long hold itself together.

The church is, if possible, more corrupted than the state.
 "An old woman, last year, was confined about six months, in the King's-bench prison, and paid above *one hundred pounds* costs, for refusing to pay church fees to the amount of *two shillings and eight-pence*."*

The first campaign against France, was to cost about twelve millions sterling to Britain, and the third requires twenty-four millions. By the same rule, the fifth campaign should cost forty-eight. The regal and ecclesiastical plunder of the late French government, and the estates of seventy thousand emigrants, have been computed at about three hundred and eighty-five millions sterling of property in the hands of the republic. If to these, we add the revenues of Austrian Flanders, and other conquered countries, with the acquisition of perhaps six millions of subjects, we shall soon be convinced, that Britain, supported only by credit, can have but a poor chance in contending with the inexhaustible resources of her antagonist. The contest may be protracted for three or four campaigns, but it can hardly fail to end in the destruction of the British monarchy.

JAMES THOMSON CALLENDER,

An Exile for writing this Pamphlet.

Philadelphia, 3d of March, 1795.

* Morning Chronicle, 6th May, 1793.

CON.

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INTRO.

INTRODUCTION.

Of British wars since the Revolution—Immense slaughter—Expense of wars—Nootka Sound—Oczakow—Tipoo Saib—Amount of National debt—Enormous extent of its interest in the next century—Scandalous terms on which it was first contracted—Sketch of the civil list of William III.—Profligate expenditure of the court—Hints for royal economy—Queen Anne—A single default of thirty-five millions sterling—Lotteries—Earl of Chatham—Specimen of British taxes—Lord North—His extravagant premiums for money—Scheme of paying off public debt—Its futility—Uniform absurdity of modern British wars—Impress of Seamen—Character and design of this work.

SINCE the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, Britain has been once at war with Holland, five times at war with France, and six times at war with Spain. The expulsion, or flight of James the Second, produced a bloody civil contest both in Scotland and Ireland. Since that time, we have also been disturbed with two rebellions in Britain, besides an endless catalogue of massacres in Asia and America. In Europe, the price which we advance for a war, hath successively extended from one hundred thousand lives, to thrice that number; and from thirty to an hundred and thirty-nine millions sterling. From Africa we import annually between thirty and forty thousand slaves, an estimate which rises, in the course of a century, to at least three millions of murders. In Bengal only, we destroyed or expelled, within the short period of six years, five millions of industrious and innocent people*; we

* Dow's History of Hindostan, quarto edition, vol. iii. page 70.

have been sovereigns of high rank, in that country, for about thirty-five years*; and there is reason to compute, that, since our elevation, we have strewed the plains of Hindostan with thirty-six millions of carcases†. Combining the diversified ravages of famine, pestilence, and the sword, it may justly be supposed; that in these transactions, fifteen hundred thousand of our countrymen have perished; a number equal to that part of the whole inhabitants of Britain who are at present able to bear arms. The destruction of our French and Spanish antagonists, and of German, Sardinian, and Portuguese mercenaries, purchased by Britain to fight against them, has amounted to at least a second fifteen hundred thousand lives. Hence it follows, that British quarrels, in only an hundred years, have deprived Europe of three millions of men, in the flower of life, whose descendants, in the progress of domestic society, must have expanded into multitudes beyond calculation. The persons destroyed, have in whole certainly exceeded thirty millions, that is to say, three hundred thousand acts of homicide *per annum*. These victims have been sacrificed to the balance of power, and the balance of trade, the honour of the British flag, the rights of the British crown, the "*omnipotence* of Parliament‡," and the security of the protestant succession. Proceeding at this rate for another century, we may, with that self-complacency, which is natural to mankind, admire ourselves and our achievements; but every other nation in the world must be entitled to wish, that an earth-quake or a volcano, should first bury the whole British islands together in the centre of the globe; that a single, but decisive exertion of Almighty vengeance, should terminate the progress and the remembrance of our crimes.

In the scale of just calculation, the most valuable commodity, next to human blood, is money. Having made a gross esti-

* On the 23d of June, 1757, Colonel Clive defeated Suraja Dowla, Nabob of Bengal. This victory laid the foundation of the territorial grandeur of the East-India Company.

† *Infra*. chap. vi.

‡ This modest phrase was current before the American revolution. It hath, since that time, been laid aside.

mate of the waste of the former, let us endeavour to compute the consumption of the latter. The expences of British wars, from the revolution to the end of the year 1789, has been stated, by Sir John Sinclair, at three hundred and seventy-seven millions, twenty-nine thousand five hundred and ninety-eight pounds sterling. The particulars are as follows, viz.

Expences of war, during the reign of Wil-

liam III.	-	-	-	-	-	£ 30,447,382
Queen Anne,	-	-	-	-	-	43,360,003
George I.	-	-	-	-	-	6,048,267
Expence of the war begun anno 1739,	-					46,418,689
Ditto of the war begun anno 1756,	-	-				111,271,996
Ditto of the American war,	-	-	-			139,171,876
Ditto of the armament respecting Holland,						
in 1787,	-	-	-	-	-	311,385

Total, *£377,029,598

Since this publication, a fleet has been armed against Spain, to enforce the privilege of killing whales at the south pole, and wild cats at twice that distance. By the account of the minister himself, as laid before parliament, the affair cost us three millions one hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds.† In point of œconomy, this project resembled the commencement of a lawsuit in chancery to recover half a crown. We have since quarrelled with Catharine of Russia, for a few acres in the deserts of Tartary; and the charges of this second armament must also have been very considerable. Thirty-three ships of the line, and about thirty thousand men, were kept up for four months, that the grand Turk might recover possession of Oczakow, and after all, this notable scheme was disappointed. At present, we are tearing asunder the dominions of Tippoo Saib; and Mr. Fox lately said, in the house of commons, that this war, which has just now been ended, went on at an expence to ourselves of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling per

* History of the public revenue of the British empire, Part III. chap. ad.

† New Annual Register, for 1791. page 141.

month, or about eight thousand guineas per day. Comprehending these fresh exploits, the amount of money debursed from the exchequer, on account of war, since the revolution, must exceed three hundred and eighty millions sterling. We are also to subjoin the value of sixteen or twenty thousand merchant-ships, taken by the enemy. This diminutive article of sixty or an hundred millions sterling, would have been sufficient for transporting and settling eight or twelve hundred thousand farmers, with their wives and children, on the banks of the Susquehannah or the Mississippi. So numerous a colony of customers could well have been spared from the nations of Europe. They would soon have rivalled the population of France, and have required a greater quantity of manufactures than this island has ever prepared for exportation. Instead of so comfortable a prospect, we are, as a nation, indebted to the extent of at least two hundred and fifty millions. The annual interest of this sum, the necessary expences of management, and of collecting the revenue that defrays it, are, all together, above *eleven millions and an half sterling*. This burden is equivalent to a yearly poll tax of one pound three shillings sterling, per head, upon every individual inhabitants of Britain*. Besides what we pay at present upon this account, it is worth while to notice what we have paid already. From the revolution to the year 1789, inclusive, the interest of the public debts, and of the public loans repaid, including other incidental arti-

* In an affair of so much importance, the utmost accuracy may be expected. The exact amount of the debt, as stated by Sir John Sinclair, is *two hundred and forty-seven millions, nine hundred and eighty-one thousand, nine hundred and twenty-seven pounds, five shillings and two pence*. History of the public revenue, Part III. chap. v. In another place, near the end of the same chapter, he has these words, "Thus including the sinking fund, and the interest of our unliquidated claims, our public debts, at present, require the sum of *ten millions, six hundred and thirty-two thousand, one hundred and ninety-one pounds fourteen shillings, and three half-pence per annum*." The expence of collecting this sum, in proportion to that of the whole British revenue, may be guessed at about nine hundred thousand pounds a year, which, added to the interest itself, gives the eleven millions and an half, stated in the text. The preface to the volume here quoted, bears date the 30th of January 1790. The Spanish and Russian squabbles must, between them, have cost at least six millions sterling. They took place after the preceding estimate had been made of the extent of the national debt; so that the sums mentioned in the text are both as to the principal and the annual charges, much about the fact, even after deducting what Mr. Pitt may have paid off.

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cles connected with these matters, has been three hundred and ninety millions, two hundred and seventy thousand, five hundred and seventy-nine pounds*.

But this is a trifle compared with the sums of interest that we must discharge in the next hundred years. The burden hath now risen to eleven millions, and five hundred thousand pounds sterling *per annum*. Six yearly payments only, from the 1st of January, 1792, to the 1st of January 1798, inclusive, with compound interest at five per cent. from the first of these two dates to the second, amount to eighty millions, nine hundred and fifty-four thousand, three hundred and forty seven pounds, four shillings and three-pence. The reader may prosecute the series of figures to the end of the next century. He will then discover that several myriads of millions sterling are not for that time alone, equal to the pressure of this enormous load. We far excel the Greeks and Romans in the arts of industry, and the resources of wealth; but it would be vain to search among ancient nations, for any instance that rivals British debts, and British folly.

It is an object of the highest curiosity and importance for every one of us, to enquire, in what manner such astonishing sums have been borrowed, and by what methods they have been expended? In the course of this work, each of these queries will be explained; but in the mean time, a few detached particulars shall be here inserted, to assist the reader in forming a conception of the rest of the business.

In the war of 1689, that seed-bed of the future calamities of Britain, money was borrowed upon annuities for lives. " Fourteen *per cent.* was granted for one life, twelve *per cent.* for two lives, and ten *per cent.* for three. Such terms were, *in the highest degree extravagant*; particularly as no attention was paid to *difference of age*†."

The same author adds, on the authority of Dr. Price, that " borrowing, at the rate of twelve *per cent.* for two lives, and

* History of the public revenue, &c. Part III. chap. 3d.
 † Ibid. Part II. chap. 4.

" ten *per cent.* for three, is giving ten *per cent.* for money in
 " the one case, and nine *per cent.* in the other.*" From
 1690, to the end of the war, the historian says, that, on the
 money borrowed, " eight *per cent.* was uniformly paid." To
 raise a farther sum upon these annuities, another expedient was
 in the sequel, embraced. The annuitants were offered a re-
 versionary interest, after the failure of their lives, for *ninety six*
years, to be reckoned from January 1695, on their paying only
 four and an half year's purchase, or sixty-three pounds for every
 annuity of fourteen pounds. In 1698, the demand was re-
 duced to four years purchase; or fifty-six pounds for the annuity
 of fourteen. For our farther satisfaction, " the same system
 " was afterwards adopted in the reign of Queen Anne.†" Some
 of these annuities remain, at this day, " to the amount
 " of one hundred and thirty one thousand two hundred and
 " three pounds, seven shillings, and eight-pence *per an-*
 " *num*, for which the sum of one million eight hundred and
 " thirty-six thousand, two hundred and seventy-five pounds,
 " seventeen shillings and ten pence three farthings, had been
 " originally contributed; and for the use of which, the public
 " must pay above *thirteen millions* before they are all ex-
 " tinct.‡"

But even all this was only a part of the evil. " Davenant
 " affirms, that the debt of the nation was swelled more by *high*
 " *premiums* than even by the exorbitant interest that was paid;
 " and that its credit was at so low an ebb, that *five millions*,
 " given by parliament, produced for the service of the war, and
 " to the uses of the public, but little more than *two millions and*
 " *an half.*§" In another passage he seems to contradict him-
 self, and to reduce the losses in this way to *one million* out of
 five; but there is full evidence on record, that his first compu-
 tation was more accurate than the second.

" In 1698, a proposal was made to parliament, of advancing
 " two millions to government, at eight *per cent.* provided the

* History of the public revenue, Part II. chap. 4.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

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" subscribers were erected into a new East-India company, with
" exclusive privileges. The old East-India company offered
" seven hundred thousand pounds, nearly the amount of their
" capital, at *four* per cent. upon the same conditions. But such
" was at that time, *the state of public credit*, that it was more
" convenient for government to borrow two millions at *eight*
" per cent. than seven hundred thousand pounds at *four*. The
" proposal of the new subscribers was accepted.*" The two mil-
lions cost an interest of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds.
The seven hundred thousand pounds could have been had at
four per cent. that is, for twenty-eight thousand. Out of the
two millions therefore, seven hundred thousand pounds were
only worth twenty-eight thousand pounds, and the remaining
one hundred and thirty-two thousand of interest, was the sum
really paid for the remaining thirteen hundred thousand pounds
of principle. Thus, the latter sum, in fact, cost the pub-
lic ten per cent. with an overplus, on the whole, of two thou-
sand pounds. These details are perhaps dry, but they are suf-
ficiently intelligible, and all men of sense will acknowledge, that
they are extremely useful. If British historians had uni-
formly composed their works on this plan, we should long since
have renounced entirely, or, at least in a great degree, the prac-
tice of foreign wars. With all proper deference to Quintilian,
such a style is preferable to that of any historical writer in his
long catalogue of literary heroes. Let us return, with these use-
ful calculations, to the reign of William.

The management of this money, when obtained, correspon-
ded with the terms of the loan. In the reign of William the
Third, the civil list, that *cup of abominations*, was supported by
certain taxes, appropriated for that purpose, and which amount-
ed " at an average, to about six hundred and eighty thousand
" pounds *per annum*.†" The public revenue of England, after
every possible extortion, was only screwed up to three millions,

* Inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations, book v. chap. i.
Part 3d. Article I.

† History of the public revenue, Part III. chap. 1.

eight hundred and ninety-five thousand, two hundred and five pounds? * so that the civil list was less than one-fifth, but more than one-sixth part of the whole revenues of England. If the civil list of this day bore the same proportion to the national income, it would extend to at least *three million sterling*. Sir John Sinclair has given a complete state of the whole expences of the civil list, during the thirteen years of the reign of the Protestant hero. A few articles may serve as a specimen of the rest. To the robes *fifty-seven thousand pounds*. This money would have clothed two thousand poor people, at forty shillings each, *per annum*, for thirteen years, with a reversion of five thousand pounds for the dress of the royal family, which consisted, properly speaking, but of two persons. Jewels, *sixty thousand pounds*. Plate, *one hundred and two thousand pounds*. Band of gentlemen pensioners, *sixty-nine thousand pounds*. To making gardens, besides an account paid under a different head, *one hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds*. After setting apart thirty-three thousand pounds for his gardens, William could have applied the rest of this money much better. He might have parcelled out of the crown lands, which are to this day lying waste in the centre of England, two thousand small farms. On each of his tenants, he might have bestowed fifty pounds to begin the world; and the first ten years of a perpetual lease, free of rent. To the stables, *two hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds*. To the great wardrobe, *three hundred and nineteen thousand pounds*. This sum would have clothed an army of sixty thousand men; or what is more estimable ten thousand tradesmen and their families. Privy purse, *four hundred and eighty-three thousand pounds*. For half this money, we might have had a beautiful edition of all the Greek and Roman classics, with English translations. To the treasurer of the chambers, *four hundred and eighty-four thousand pounds*. This sum would have been of the utmost service, in paving and lighting the streets of London. To the treasurer of the late Queen, whose sister, Queen

* History of the Public Revenue, Part III. chap. 1.

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Anne, William did not think worth a plate-full of green peas,* *five hundred and six thousand pounds.* To the prince and princess of Denmark, a harmless but useless couple, *six hundred and thirty-eight thousand pounds.* Fifty-three thousand debtors, at twelve pounds each, might have been relieved from prison by this money; or a fund might have been established with it, for the annual discharge of a thousand prisoners of that kind, on the birth day of his majesty, and an equal number on the day when he signed a warrant for the massacre of Glencoe. Secret services, *seven hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds.* Fees and salaries, *eight hundred and fifty-eight thousand pounds.* Pensions and annuities, *six hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds.* Conferrer of the household, *thirteen hundred thousand pounds.* In the end of the last century one shilling went farther than three can go now; so that this sum was equal in reality to four millions at this day. The deliverer of England, therefore, spent what corresponds to three hundred thousand pounds *per annum*, on his household, for thirteen years, while, during a considerable part of his reign, his subjects, by thousands and ten thousands expired of hunger†. To the paymaster of the works, *four hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds.* The whole bill extends to eight millions eight hundred and eighty thousand pounds; and it does not appear that one-fourth part of it was expended for wise and useful purposes‡. This was the frugality of government, at a time, when they were compelled to borrow money at ten *per cent.*

In the next reign, the system was not much improved. An English house of Commons informed Queen Anne, that "there remained at Christmas, 1710, thirty-five millions, three hundred and two thousand, one hundred and seven pounds of public money unaccounted for§." In 1714, one million, eight hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds were raised by a lottery. Out of this sum, *four hundred and seventy six*

* Anecdotes of the Dutchess of Marlborough.

† *Infra.* chap. 3.

‡ Sixteen hundred and seventy pounds for the widows of officers, appear, like Falstaff's half-penny worth of bread, in a corner of one article.

§ History of the public revenue, Part II. chap. 4.

thousand pounds were distributed among the proprietors of the fortunate tickets. This was a premium of about thirty-four *per cent.* on the sum actually received*. In 1744, the charter of the East-India company was prolonged from 1766 to 1786. This was an anticipation of twenty-three years. The value of the compensation, granted by the company to government, did not exceed thirty thousand pounds.† This was like Esau selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage. If the bargain had been deferred till the expiration of the former monopoly, perhaps forty times that sum could have been obtained.

Sir John Sinclair gives a "general view of PREMIUMS upon " the new loans," in the war of 1756.‡ These premiums amount in value to *fourteen millions, two hundred and eighty-three thousand, nine hundred and seventy-five pounds sterling.* The total sum borrowed, and added to the national debt, for this premium, was seventy-two millions, one hundred and eleven thousand, and four pounds. The premium is, within a perfect trifle, *one-fifth part* of the whole money obtained. Thus, out of every twenty shillings of the loan, we gave back four shillings as a reward for the lender. At this rate the British armies conquered Guadalope and Canada; and we continue to boast of the glory of these exploits. Yet a person might with as much reason, burn his house, for the sake of roasting an egg in its ashes. We may suppose, that the rest of the national debt was created upon terms at least equally hard; and the fifth part of the whole two hundred and fifty millions contracted, gives a premium of FIFTY MILLIONS STERLING. After such work, is it not wonderful, that we are now harnessed in debts and taxes, like horses in a carriage. One-third part of the expences of a family consist in the payment of public burdens. Five hundred thousand people in England are supported by charity.§ We must give twenty-six pounds sterling

per

* History of the public revenue, Part II. chap. 4.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Dr. Wendeborn, a candid and well informed writer, in his View of England, towards the close of the eighteenth century, says, that " whoever lives upon " a thousand a year, is supposed to pay at present about *six hundred* of it in government duties, taxes, excise, church parish and poor rates."

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per annum for leave to keep a hackney coach; and twenty shillings *per annum* for leave to make a farthing candle, besides one penny per pound of excise upon the manufacture; nine-pence *per* pound of importation duty for peruvian bark; and three guineas for leave to shoot a partridge worth two pence. Half the price of a bottle of wine, or a bowl of punch, goes off in taxes for leave to drink it. This deserves not to be termed the language of malignity. Those who pay the reckoning have a right to read the bill,

I am no orator as Brutus is,
To stir men's blood; I only speak right on.
I tell you that which *you yourselves do know*.

On the 27th of December, 1791, a bill for an additional duty, on malt, came before the house of peers. On this occasion, lord Kinnoul said, that "their lordships were not perhaps apprised of the rate at which *barley*, in its various forms, was already taxed; if they were not, the enumeration would astonish them. As malt only, it was taxed at the rate of ten shillings and six-pence per quarter. The additional duty of three pence per bushel would raise it to twelve shillings and six pence per quarter. When to this were added the land tax, and the duties on beer, which he severally calculated, it would be found, that the raw commodity, which brought the proprietor of the soil on which it was raised, about *nine shillings*, paid to government, in its several stages, above *two pounds ten shillings*.*" Every person who advanced a part of these two pounds ten shillings, would make a separate charge on his customer for the advance of his money, so that these two pounds ten shilling would

He also observes, that of the people of England, "one million is so poor it must be supported by the rest." These assertions have been considerably softened in the text, to avoid any charge of exaggeration. They do not apply to Scotland where beggars are less numerous, and parish and poor rates but little known.

As a necessary consequence of this enormous taxation, the author informs us, that "fifty years ago, a family might live very handsomely on five hundred pounds *per annum*, but a thousand will at present *hardly go so far*."

* Senator, Vol. 1. page 245.

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finally cost the drinker of the liquor at least three pounds ten shillings, perhaps four or five pounds; and all this on an article originally worth nine shillings. The calculation of four or five pounds, being charged for two pounds ten shillings, will not seem unreasonable, if we consider what follows. A tax of a penny per bottle, or some such trifle, was once imposed by Lord North on the retailers of wine. To the surprise of all men, the vintners of London instantly raised the liquor six pence per bottle. If Britain pays at present eighteen millions sterling of taxes to the crown, we may fairly compute that she pays at least twelve millions of an additional, though invisible tax, to the landholders, merchants, and manufacturers, who, in the first place, advance the money. At the opening of a ministerial budget, there is never heard any notice as to this silent but most inevitable and terrible of all taxes. Between this burden, and that of tide-waiters and excise-men, it may be feared, that every shilling which goes into the exchequer, has, upon a medium, cost two shillings to the nation.

One other instance only shall be subjoined in this place, of the manner in which public debts have been contracted. In 1781, Lord North received for the national service twelve millions sterling. For this sum he gave eighteen millions of *three per cent.* stock, and three millions of *four per cent.* stock. The annual interest of these two sums is six hundred and sixty thousand pounds, or five and an half *per cent.* for the twelve millions actually received. Money is not commonly advanced in England, at more than four and an half *per cent.* of interest; and very frequently at *four per cent.* At the former of these two rates, the twelve millions borrowed by Lord North ought only to have cost five hundred and forty thousand pounds per annum. The *one hundred and twenty thousand pounds* additional at twenty-five years purchase, make a premium of *three millions sterling* for the loan of *twelve millions*. It is not surprising that Sir John Sinclair, Dr. Swift, and other writers, complain so loudly of the scandalous conditions upon which the public debts of Britain have been borrowed. The
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original contractors with government for lending of the money, remind us of a band of usurers, embracing every advantage over the necessities of the state; while the ministers of the crown seem like desperate gamesters, who care not by what future expence they secure another cast of the dice. From the facts above stated, the public funds prove to be a stupendous mass of fraud, profligacy, imposture and extortion. Behold that sacred edifice of *national faith*, that political *sanctum sanctorum*, which we support at an annual expence of eleven millions and an half sterling!*

What kind of gentry some of these creditors are, there was no body better able to inform us than the late Earl of Chatham. "There is a set of men," says he, "in the city of London, who are known to live in riot and luxury, upon the plunder of the ignorant, the innocent, and the helpless, upon that part of the community, which stands most in need of, and best deserves the care and protection of the legislature. To me, my Lords, whether they be miserable jobbers of Change-Alley, or the lofty Asiatic plunderers of Leadenhall Street, they are all equally detestable. I care but little whether a man walks on foot, or is drawn by eight horses, or six horses; if his luxury be supported by the plunder of his country, I despise and abhor him. My Lords, while I had the honour of serving his Majesty, *I never ventured to look at THE TREASURY, but from a distance*; it is a business I am unfit for, and to which I never could have submitted. The little I know of it, has not served to raise my opinion of what is vulgarly called the *monied interest*, I mean that BLOOD-SUCKER, that MUCKWORM, which calls itself the friend of Government, which pretends to serve this or that administration, and may be purchased on the same terms by any administration. Under this description,

* Of the original commencement of this debt, the characters, motives, and enrolments of its authors, the reader may find an authentic history in the *Political Progress*, Part II, which will appear in a few months.

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" I include the whole race of commissioners, jobbers, contractors, clothiers, and remitters. *"

The friends of Mr. William Pitt boast much of the nine millions of debt, which, in a period of six years, he is said to have discharged. The scheme is an absolute bubble. He began to buy up *three per cents.* in April 1786; at which time they sold for seventy. They rose, almost instantly, to seventy-seven, and upwards. They have since been much higher; and if the minister shall make any substantial progress in his plan, they will very soon reach an hundred *per cent.* and very likely go higher. Thus, as Sir John Sinclair observes, " the more we pay, the more we shall be indebted; every shilling that is laid out in purchasing stock, raises the price proportionably." So peculiar is the nature of this national debt, and so very hazardous an attempt to discharge it! To make this quite plain, it may be observed, that when Mr. Pitt first began to buy up stock, the market price of the whole three *per cent.* funds, was all together but one hundred and seventeen millions, six hundred and forty-three thousand pounds. In two years and an half, he had purchased a small part of it; but the prodigious parade that he made about this operation, raised the price of the remaining stock to one hundred and twenty-two millions, four hundred and twenty thousand pounds. The sequel, in October 1788, was, that the minister had expended or sunk *two millions, and seven hundred thousand pounds*, and yet, he left matters WORSE THAN HE FOUND THEM by *four millions, seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand pounds*. The following statement puts the matter in a short, and clear view:

In October, 1788, the value of the whole remaining three per cent. stock was	- - -	£122,420,408
Carried forward,		£122,420,401

* *Vide* his speech in the debate on Falkland's Islands, which has been re-printed in the Anecdotes of his Life just published. This quarrel ended, like others, in our disappointment, and perhaps disgrace. Besides much expence and trouble to individuals, the nation squandered between three and four millions sterling.

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Mr. Pitt, at an expence of two
millions, seven hundred thousand
pounds, had before purchased stock
to the amount of - - - - £3,626,000

In April, 1786, before he began to buy up
at all, the whole three per cents, were only at
seventy per cent. or - - - - - 117,643,308

ACTUAL INCREASE OF NATIONAL DEBT,
over and above the two millions, seven hun-
dred thousand pounds, cast away in the pur-
chase of stock, - - - - - £004,777,093

It must be acknowledged, in favour of Mr. Pitt, that while
he has augmented the principal sum of the national debt, he
has reduced the annual payment of interest. The three mil-
lions and six hundred thousand pounds of three *per cents*.
which are paid off, cost, formerly, one hundred and eight
thousand pounds *per annum* of interest, which is now extin-
guished. This is the sole advantage arising to the public from
the transaction. But there was a shorter way to have come at
this same purpose. Mr. Pitt and his parliament ought to have
struck from the civil list a number of useless pensioners, such,
for example, as the groom of the stole, the master of the horse,
the master of the robes, the master of the hawks, twelve lords
and twelve grooms of the bed-chamber, twenty-four preachers
in his majesty's chapel at Whitehall, and the *wet nurses* of the
prince of Wales and the duke of York.* In stead of abolish-
ing useless places, to discharge this annuity, Mr. Pitt squeezed
out of the people two millions and seven hundred thousand
pounds, which, with the expence of collecting it, comes to at
least three millions sterling. The extinction of a burden of
one hundred and eight thousand pounds *per annum* has thus
cost more than it is worth. At four and an half *per cent*. three

* In the court and city calendar, for 1775, eight of these ladies are charged to
the nation, at salaries each of two hundred pounds *per annum*; besides dry nurses,
work-women, rockers, and other luggage of the same sort.

millions

millions produce one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds *per annum*; which is itself twenty-seven thousand pounds more than *the annuity extinguished*. Here we must observe, that ten *per cent.* is but a moderate and ordinary profit on the capital of stock, either in husbandry, commerce, or manufactures. Hence, if these three millions had been suffered to remain in the hands of the people of Britain, they would have afforded to the community at large, at least three hundred thousand pounds *per annum* of additional wealth; and perhaps twice or thrice that sum. The slightest and most necessary taxes, are, therefore, in their own nature, very destructive. When a tobacconist, or a tanner, pays thirty pounds of excise, he does not merely lose thirty shillings *per annum*, as the legal interest of his money, but he is likewise prevented from the chance of converting this capital of thirty pounds into an augmented sum of thirty-three, thirty-six, or forty pounds. If the tradesman can shove the tax upon his costomers, by raising the price of his commodities, it comes exactly to the same point at last, as *their* active capitals are always, and with mathematical certainty, reduced in an equal proportion. Thus it is evident, that every sum raised from the public as an impost, or excise, must in reality cost them ten *per cent.* This, by the way, demonstrates the rashness of wars undertaken in defence of a *foreign trade*, since the sums levied to support the struggle are, every farthing of them, drawn from the circulation of domestic commerce; a commerce always more safe, and very commonly more profitable, than that which kings are so frequently fighting for. A commercial war is truly *casting our bread upon the waters, that we may find it after many days*. Now, as every million of pounds, raised by government from the people of Britain, is, upon an average, at least equal to an annuity for ever, of an hundred thousand pounds, out of the pockets of those who pay it, the inference is, that if Mr. Pitt had understood or regarded the interest of this country, he never would have undertaken to discharge a debt bearing three *per cent.* at an expence of ten; or, as before observed, an annuity

nuity of one hundred and eight thousand pounds, by paying a capital of three millions, producing a yearly profit of three hundred thousand pounds to the holders of it. In this way Mr. Pitt pays off the public debt. Since October 1788, stocks have risen prodigiously; so that the period here chosen for the examination of this celebrated project, is by far the most favourable that can be taken. A full account of its subsequent history will be given hereafter. Mr. Pitt might as well propose to empty the Baltic with a tobacco pipe. But let us admit the case, that he at present had an hundred millions in the exchequer. The discharge of the public debt is, on his principles, absurd and unjust. Stocks would instantly rise to at least an hundred; and he begins perhaps by paying off the twenty-one millions of three and four *per cents.* for which Lord North actually received but *twelve millions.* Thus, after giving, as above stated, five and an half *per cent.* for a loan of twelve millions, we discharge that original twelve millions itself, with *twenty-one millions.* The present scheme for extinguishing the public debt is therefore impracticable, if it were honest, and, as an act of robbery against ourselves, it would be dishonest, if it were practicable.

But, supposing that Mr. Pitt had in reality paid off nine millions of debt, and lessened the public burdens of its interest, yet, for the sake of an impartial and satisfactory argument, his advocates ought to arrange, in an opposite column, a list of the additional taxes which he has imposed, and of the thousands of families, whom such taxes have ruined.* A third column should contain a list of the millions which this minister

* In 1723, the tax on hawkers and pedlars in England, produced, in the gross, ten thousand, seven hundred and seventy-three pounds; and eight thousand, six hundred and four pounds of net income. Thus, one-fifth of the revenue was sunk in the collection. In 1785, Mr. Pitt, cutting the second inch out of a man's nose, doubled the tax; and, in 1788, the total amount of it had shrunk to *five thousand, four hundred and sixty-one pounds.* Of this sum, the net produce was but *two thousand, one hundred and seventy pounds;* three-fifths of the produce of the tax, were thus sunk in collecting it. This diabolical impost was laid for the professed purpose of extirpating pedlars. Crowds of them were reduced to a state of starving. The new edition to the tax hath since been repealed. Vid. some account of it in the history of the public revenue. Part III. chap. 3.

has wasted upon Spanish and Russian armaments, on the unprovoked and piratical war against Tipoo Saib, on the Chinese embassy, the successive elections for Westminster, the creditors of the prince of Wales, and the nabob of Arcot, and the Barratrian settlement of Botany Bay. The pretended plan of discharging the national debt, on which Mr. Pitt sometimes expatiates to parliament, for two hours together, was but a sorry trap for popularity; and if "the *swinish* multitude" had been much wiser than the rest of their family, they must, in a moment, have seen through and despised the artifice. The debts of Britain never will be paid; they never can be paid; and in the present way of discharging them, they never, in justice, ought to be paid. The hardness of the father of this delusion exceeds any thing that was ever heard of; because his arguments and assumptions are, as above explained, in a state of hostility with the multiplication table; and because, though religious impostors have pretended to work miracles, yet none even of them has ever asserted that two and two make five. But though these debts will never be extinguished by the attempts of the minister, they have certainly passed the meridian of their existence. Had the war with America lasted for two years longer, Britain would not, at this day, have owed a shilling; and if we shall persist in rushing into carnage, with our wonted contempt of all feeling and reflection, it must still be expected, that, according to the practice of other nations, a sponge or a bonfire will finish the game of funding.

What advantage has resulted to Britain from such incessant scenes of prodigality and of bloodshed? In the wars of 1689, and 1702, this country was but an hobby-horse for the emperor and the Dutch. The rebellion in 1715, was excited by the despotic insolence of the whigs. George the First purchased Bremen and Verden, from the King of Denmark, to whom they did not belong. This pitiful and dirty bargain produced the Spanish war of 1718, and a squadron dispatched for six different years to the Baltic. Such exertions cost us an hundred times more than these quagmire duchies are worth, even

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to an elector of Hanover; a distinction which, on this business becomes necessary, for as to Britain, it was never pretended, that we could gain a farthing by such an acquisition*. In 1727, the nation forced the same George into a war with Spain, which ended as usual with much mischief on both sides. The Spanish war of the people in 1739, and the Austrian subsidy war of the crown, which commenced in 1741, were absurd in their principles, and ruinous in their consequences. At sea, we met with nothing but hard blows. On the continent, we began by hiring the queen of Hungary to fight her own battles against the king of Prussia, and ten years after that war had ended, we hired the king of Prussia, with six hundred and seventy-one thousand pounds *per annum*, to fight his own battles against her. If this be not folly, what are we to call it? As to the quarrel of 1756, "It was remarked by all Europe," says Frederick, "that in her dispute with France, *every wrong step was on the side of England.*" By seven years of fighting, and an additional debt of seventy-two millions sterling, we secured Canada; but had Wolfe and his army been driven from the heights of Abraham, our grandsons might have come too early to hear of an American revolution. As to this event, the circumstances are almost too shocking for reflection. At that time an English woman had discovered a pretended remedy for the canine madness, and Frederic advises a French correspondent *to recommend this medicine to the use of the parliament of England, as they must certainly have been bitten by a mad dog.*

In the quarrels of the continent we should concern ourselves but little; for in a defensive war, we may safely dety all the nations of Europe. When the whole civilized world was embodied under the banners of Rome, the most distinguished of her conquerors, at the head of thirty thousand veterans†, dis-

* The solitary muttering of Postlethwaite, in his dictionary, is not worth naming as an exception.

† Cæsar says, that he had with him five legions, and two thousand cavalry, which with the light troops, can hardly have been less than the number specified in the text. A legion, at that time, contained five thousand infantry.

embarked for a second time on the coast of Britain. The face of the country was covered with a forest, and the solitary tribes were divided upon the old question *Who shall be king?* The Island could hardly have attained to a twentieth part of its present population, yet by his own account, the invader found a retreat prudent, or perhaps necessary. South Britain was afterwards subjected, but this acquisition was the task of more than thirty years. Every village was bought with the blood of the legions. We may confide in the moderation of a Roman historian, when he is to describe the disasters of his countrymen. In a single revolt, seventy thousand of the usurpers were exterminated; and fifty, or, as others relate, seventy thousand soldiers perished in the course of a Caledonian campaign. Do the masters of modern Europe understand the art of war better than Severus, and Agricola, and Julius Cæsar? Is any combination of human power to be compared with the talents and resources of the Roman empire? If the naked Scots of the first century, resisted and vanquished the conquerors of the species, what ought we to fear from any antagonist of this day? On six months warning Britain could muster ten or twelve hundred thousand militia. Yet, while the despots of Germany were fighting about a suburb, the nation has submitted to tremble for its existence, and the blossoms of domestic happiness have been blasted by crimps, and subsidies, and press-gangs, and excise acts. Our political and commercial systems are evidently nonsense. We possess within this single island, every production both of art and nature, which is necessary for the most comfortable enjoyment of life; yet for the sake of tea, and sugar, and tobacco, and a few other despicable luxuries, we have rushed into an abyss of taxes and of blood. The boasted extent of our trade, and the quarrels and public debts which attend it, have augmented the scarcity of bread, and even of grass, at least three hundred per cent.

There is no law more just, says Virgil, than that the projector of death should perish by his own stratagem. We have suffered in a full proportion to what we have inflicted. As to the slaughter

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ter of our countrymen in time of war, George Chalmers, Esq. digests it in a style perfectly suitable to the understanding and the conscience of a modern statesman. The British aristocracy consider the rest of the nation, as a commodity bought and sold; and if we required absolute evidence of this truth, here is a full attestation. "It is not easy," says Mr. Chalmers, "to calculate the numbers who die in the camp, or the battle, more than would perish from *want*, or from *vice*, in the hamlet or city. It is some consolation, that the industrious are too wealthy and independent to covet the pittance of the soldier, or to court the dangers of the sailor; and though the *forsaken lover*, or the *restless vagrant*, may have looked for refuge in the army or the fleet, it may admit of some doubt how far the giving proper employment to both (viz. that of committing robbery and murder, and of getting themselves knocked on the head for it), may not have freed their parishes from idleness, quietude, and from *burdens*. It is the *expences* more than the *slaughter* of modern war which debilitate every community."* This paragraph explains the memorable epithet which has been bestowed on the British nation. For if the soldiers and sailors of the British army and navy had been transformed by the wand of Circe into hogs, or even rats, it is impossible that this writer could have spoken with greater indifference of their extirpation. He considers it as a necessary circumstance, that a great part of the common people must perish from want or from vice, unless they are discharged in the form of armies on the rest of the world. The remedy is a thousand times worse than the disease; and it would be more humane to give a premium to poor people for stifling their infants in the cradle. "If I am a coward," says Jaffier, "who made me so?" What but the miserable construction of our government can have produced such a horrid necessity? When ten millions and an half sterling *per annum* are due, and must be paid to the creditors of the nation, besides a million to the officers who collect it, when two million sterling are bestowed on the church of

* Comparative estimate, p. 149.

England, and a much larger sum on pensioners of all kinds, it is impossible, that we should not find in the opposite scale, a correspondent balance of want and wretchedness. When you raise up one end of a beam above its level, the other end must sink in proportion. When you give six or eight hundred thousand pounds *per annum* to a single family, and its trumpery of a household, you reduce, with mathematical certainty, thirty or forty thousand families to poverty. It is not difficult to see that such a political progress must end in a political explosion. Mr. Hume, after adverting to the extremely frivolous object as he calls it, of the war in 1756, makes this reflection. "Our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not excepting even the crusades. For I suppose there is no demonstration so clear, that the Holy Land was *not* the road to paradise, as there is, that the endless increase of national debts, is the direct road to NATIONAL RUIN. But having now *completely reach'd that goal*, it is needless at present to look back on the past. It will be found in the present year (1776), that all the revenues of this island, north of Trent, and west of Reading, are mortgaged and anticipated forever." He concludes with this remark: "So egregious, indeed, has been our folly, that we have even lost *all title to compassion* in the numerous calamities that are awaiting us."*

It is hard to say what Mr. Chalmers can have designed by introducing, in the quotation above cited, *the forsaken lover*. His allusion calls to our remembrance the practice of impressing seamen, and, in a work of this nature, that subject deserves illustration. "The power of impressing seamen," says Blackstone, "for the sea service, by the king's commission, has been a matter of some dispute, and submitted to with great reluctance; though it hath very *clearly and learnedly* been shewn, by Sir Michael Foster, that the practice of impressing, and granting powers to the admiralty for that purpose, is of very

* History of England. Vol. Vth, p. 475. London octavo edition, 1778.

" *ancient date*, and hath been uniformly continued by a *regular series of precedents* to the present time; whence he concludes it to be part of the common law. The difficulty arises from hence, that no statute has expressly declared this power to be in the crown, though many of them *very strongly imply it*." The crime of man-stealing is much greater than that of robbery, and only just less than that of murder, in which it has frequently terminated. A thousand British statutes in defence of it, could not have altered the essence of the guilt. When the late Spanish and Russian armaments were laid aside, persons who had been impressed, were sometimes discharged, at the distance of three or four hundred miles from their places of residence, and with a bounty of ten or fifteen shillings each. During the wise dispute about Falkland's Islands, which were, in value to this country, below the power of figures, a workman in London was returning one evening to his family with his weekly wages. He was apprehended by a press-gang, and cast into the hold of a tender. His landlord, and some other creditors, heard of what they called his elopement. They seized on his furniture, and his wife and child were turned to the door. Within a few days after, the mother was delivered of a second child, in a garret. When weakness permitted her to rise, she left her two naked children, and wandered into the streets, as a common beggar. Instead of obtaining assistance, she was reproached as an abandoned vagabond. In despair, she went into a shop, and attempted to carry off a small piece of linen. She was seized, tried and condemned to be hanged. In her defence, the woman said, that she had lived reputably and happy, till a press-gang robbed her of her husband, and in him, of all means to support herself and her family; and that in attempting to cloathe her new-born infant, she perhaps did wrong, as she did not, at that time, know what she did. The parish officers, and other witnesses, bore testimony to the truth of her averment, but all to no purpose. She was ordered for Tyburn. Though her milk, if she had any, must have been

* Commentaries on the laws of England, Book 1. Chap. 13.

fermented into poison, it seems that nobody condescended to seek a nurse for her child. *The hangman dragged her sucking infant from her breast, when he straitened the cord about her neck.* On the 13th of May, 1777, Sir William Meredith mentioned this assassination in the House of Commons. "Never," said he, "was there a fouler murder committed against the law, than that of this woman by the law." These were the fruits of what Englishmen call *their inestimable privilege of a trial by jury*. It would not be difficult to fill a large volume with decisions of this stamp, though there has not, perhaps, occurred any single case which was, in all its circumstances, so absolutely infernal.

In this introduction, we have seen a sketch of the history of certain monarchs and ministers, some of whom are, at this day held up as the political saviours of Britain. The reader may compare the wanton slaughter of multitudes, and the profligate expenditure of millions, with the *guilt*, as it was termed, of Mary Jones. He will then judge which of the two parties best deserved a halter*. This little narrative may serve as a supplement to the very clear and learned demonstration of Sir Michael Foster.

This publication consists not of fluent declamation, but of curious authenticated and important facts, with a few short observations interspersed, which seemed necessary to explain them. The reader will meet with no mournful periods to the memory of *annual* or *triennial* parliaments; for while one half of the members are nominated by the house of peers, it is of small concern whether they hold their places for life, or but for a single day. Some of our projectors are of opinion, that to shorten the duration of parliament, would be an ample remedy for all our grievances. The advantages of a popular election have likewise been much extolled. Yet an acquaintance with Thucydides, or Plutarch, or Guicciardini, or Ma-

* The particulars of this story are extracted from a letter to Charles Jenkinson, Esq. secretary at war, by Mr. John Clark, translator of the Caledonian Bards. The letter was printed at Edinburgh, in 1780.

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chiavel, may tend to calm the raptures of a republican apostle. The plan of universal suffrages has been loudly recommended by the duke of Richmond; and, on the 16th of May 1782, that nobleman, seconded by Mr. Horne Tooke, and Mr. Pitt, was sitting in a tavern, composing advertisements of reformation for the newspapers. The times are changed; but had his plan been adopted, it is possible that we should, at this day, have looked back, with regret, on the humiliating, yet tranquil despotism of a Scots, or a Cornish borough.

The style of this work is concise and plain; and it is hoped that it will be found sufficiently respectful to all parties. The question to be decided is, are we to proceed with the war system? Are we, in the progress of the nineteenth century, to embrace five thousand fresh taxes, to squander a second five hundred millions sterling, and to extirpate thirty millions of people?

EDINBURGH, 14th September, 1792.

THE

THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS
OF
BRITAIN.

CHAPTER I.

*Purity and importance of Scots representatives in parliament—
Parchment barons—Anecdotes of the Scots excise—Window
tax—Extracts from an authentic report to the lords of the
treasury—Herring fishery—Salt and coal duties—Dreadful
oppression—Fate of Sir John Fenwick—History of the cre-
ditors of Charles the Second—Summary of the public services
of the prince of Wales.*

THE people of Scotland are, on all occasions, foolish enough to interest themselves in the good or bad fortune of an English prime minister. Lord North once possessed this frivolous veneration, which hath since been transferred to Mr. William Pitt; and the Scots, in general, have long been remarked, as the most submissive and contented subjects of the British crown. It is hard to say what obligations have excited that universal and superlative ardour of loyalty, for which, till very lately, we have been so strikingly distinguished. Mr. Brinsly Sheridan observed, some time ago, in the house of commons, that *the Scots nation hath just as much interest in the government of Britain, as the miners of Siberia have in the government of Russia.* The assertion was at once the most humiliating and well founded. A public revenue of eleven hundred thousand pounds annually is extracted from North-Britain.

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Britain. Of this sum, at least six hundred thousand pounds* are lodged in the exchequer of England, a country that has incessantly, and not very decently, reproached us for poverty. It is strange that sixteen hundred thousand people should submit to pay eleven hundred thousand pounds *per annum* to a government, in the direction of which they have nothing to say. It is very natural that a nation, absorbing six hundred thousand pounds a year of our money, should be a great deal richer than ourselves; and, at the same time, it is likewise very natural, that they should despise the Scots as a people, the most abject and contemptible of the species.

To England we were for many centuries, a hostile, and we are still considered by them as a foreign, and in effect a conquered nation. It is true, that an extremely diminutive part of us are suffered to elect almost every twelfth member in the British house of commons; but these representatives have no title to vote, or act in a separate body. Every statute proceeds upon the majority of the voices of the whole compound assembly. What therefore, can forty-five persons accomplish, when opposed to five hundred and thirteen? They feel the absolute insignificance of their situation, and behave accordingly. An equal number of elbow chairs, placed, once for all, on the ministerial benches, would be less expensive to government, and just about as manageable. These, and every ministerial tool of the same kind, may be called expensive, because those who are obliged to *buy*, must be understood to *sell*†, and those who

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* History of the public revenue, part III. chap. 6. The statement fills four quarto pages; it appears to be candid, and as authentic and accurate, as the nature of the materials would admit. Some years ago, Sir John Sinclair transmitted a letter on this subject to a society in Scotland; and I have heard Scotsmen, so sunk in the mire of Hanoverian superstition, so degraded below *the beasts that perish*, as to censure him for presumption in doing so.

† A worthy representative was requested by his constituents, to attend to their interest in parliament. "Damn you, and your instructions too," said he, "I have bought you, and I will sell you." *Political Disquisitions*, vol. I. p. 280.

About twenty years ago, Sir Lawrence Dundas wrote a letter to one of his agents in the Scots boroughs, and enjoined him, at the approaching election for parliament, *not to be outbidden*. This epistle was intercepted by his opponents, and if I mistake not, printed in the news papers. Some time ago a person resided at Dumfries, who subsisted on a salary of about fifty pounds. He was a fictitious voter,

and

range themselves under the banners of opposition, can only be considered, as having rated their voices too high for a purchaser in the parliamentary auction.

There is a fashionable phrase, *the politics of the county*, which I can never hear pronounced without a glow of indignation. Compared with such *politics*, even pimping is respectable. Our supreme court have indeed interposed, though very feebly, to extirpate what in Scotland are called *parchment barons*, and have thus prevented a crowd of unhappy wretches from plunging into an abyss of perjury. But in other respects, their decision is of no consequence, since it most certainly cannot be of the smallest concern to this country, who are our electors, and representatives; or, indeed, whether we are represented at all. Our members, with some very singular exceptions, are the mere satellites of the minister of the day; and forward to serve his most oppressive and criminal purposes.

It seems to have been long a maxim with the monopolizing directors of our southern masters, to extirpate, as quickly as possible, every manufacture in this country, that interferes with their own. Has any body forgot the scandalous breach of national faith, by which the Scottish distilleries have been brought to the verge of destruction? Has not the manufacture of starch also been driven, by every engine of judicial torture, to the last pang of its existence? Have not the manufacturers of paper, printed calicoes, malt liquors, and glass, been harrassed by the most vexatious methods of exacting the revenue? Methods equivalent to an addition of ten, or sometimes an hundred *per cent.* of the duty payable. Let us look around this insulted country, and say, on what manufacture, except the linen, taxation has not fastened its bloody fangs?

In the excise annals of Scotland, that year which expired on the 5th of July, 1790, produced, for the duties on soap, *sixty-five thousand pounds*. On the 5th of July, 1791, the annual

and received this annuity for perjurying himself once in every seven years. His situation was a common jest, while the people in general had no more idea of the meanness of their political condition, than an equal number of horses in a stable. Every Scotsman may, without effort, recollect an hundred anecdotes of the same nature.

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amount of these duties was only *forty-five thousand pounds*; and by the same hopeful progress, in three years more at farthest, our ministers will enjoy the pleasure of extirpating a branch of trade, once flourishing and extensive. Two men were, some years ago, executed at Edinburgh, for robbing the excise-office of twenty seven pounds; but offenders may be named, who ten thousand times better deserve punishment. Oppressive statutes, and a most tyrannical method of enforcing them, have thus, in a single year, deprived the revenue of twenty thousand pounds, in one branch only, and have compelled many industrious families to seek refuge in England; and then our legislators, to borrow the honest language of George Rous, Esq. "have the insolence to call this GOVERNMENT."

By an oriental monopoly, we have obtained the *unexampled privilege* of buying a pound of the same tea, for six or eight shillings, with which other nations would eagerly supply us at half that price*. Nay, we have to thank our present illustrious minister, that this vegetable has been reduced from a rate still more extravagant. His popularity began by the commutation act. Wonders were promised, wonders were expected, and wonders have happened! A nation, consisting of men who call themselves *enlightened*, have consented to build up their windows, that they might enjoy the permission of sipping in the dark a cup of tea, ten *per cent.* cheaper than formerly; though still at double its intrinsic price.

Such are the glorious consequences of our stupid veneration for a minister, and our absurd submission to his capricious dictates!

General assertions, unsupported by proper evidence, deserve but little attention. I shall therefore lay before the reader some extracts from a book published in 1786, by Dr. James Anderson. This work is hardly known, yet every friend to the prosperity of Scotland ought to be intimately acquainted with its contents.

* In Philadelphia, tea is cheaper by one half than in Edinburgh. At Gottenburgh also, the difference, in favour of the Swedes, is very great.

In 1785, this gentleman was employed, by the lords of the treasury, to make a tour among the Hebrides and western coasts of Scotland, for the purpose of ascertaining the best methods to promote the fisheries, and the consequent improvement of that part of the country. This commission, Dr. Anderson executed with that ardour and fidelity of investigation, for which he has long been distinguished. It is impossible, in a short performance of this nature, to give an analysis of the volume; but the following particulars will serve to shew, that the western coasts and the western islands of Scotland, groan under the most enormous oppression. Dr. Anderson has printed part of a report, dated the 14th of July 1785, and made by a committee of the House of Commons. They give an account of the custom-house duties collected for ten successive years, in nine counties of Scotland, viz. Argyle, Inverness, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, Shetland, Cromarty, Nairn and Moray. The expence of collection, for these ten years, from the 1st of January 1775, to the 31st of December 1784, was

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The committee add, that "they have little reason to expect a more favourable result from their enquiries respecting the excise than the customs." The author subjoins, that an account of the excise had since been published, and *confirmed the truth of this observation*. But this is not the worst; for there is likewise to be added a part of the expence of cruisers employed under the board of customs in Scotland. On an average of five years, preceding the year 1785, this charge amounted to nine thousand eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, twelve shillings and four-pence. "If," says Dr. Anderson, "we suppose that one half of the above expence should be stated to

* Introduction, page 63. There is an error of the press in subtracting the one sign from the other, which has been here corrected.

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" the account of the nine counties above mentioned, which I
" conceive to be an under proportion, then the expence on this
" head would be four thousand, nine hundred and thirty-seven
" pounds, sixteen shillings and two-pence."* This article is
very near equal to the whole annual produce of the customs of
these nine counties. If we take the different sums in round
numbers, we may say, that the gross produce of the customs is
five thousand pounds, the expence of collecting them five thou-
sand pounds, and the expence of cruizers, to prevent smuggling,
five thousand pounds. Thus, in the course of ten years, go-
vernment collected fifty thousand pounds, by debursing one
hundred thousand. There certainly never was such a shameful
system of robbery heard of, even in the annals of the Turks,
the Spaniards, or the British East-India company. Were the
whole mass of British taxes collected at such an expence, the
government itself, would, in six months, become bankrupt;
and maids of honour, and grooms of the bedchamber, and the
whole cloud of sinecure vermin, would vanish, like the exha-
lations of a quagmire, in the tempest of revolutionary vengeance.
" A fact of this nature, when thus fairly brought to light,
" cannot fail to strike every thinking person with some degree
" of astonishment and horror. A croud of reflections here press
" upon the mind. Why are these persons oppressed with taxes,
" when the state is no ways benefitted by them? Why are the
" other members of the community loaded with burthens, to
" enforce the payment of these unproductive taxes here? From
" what cause does it happen that these people complain of taxes
" while they pay next to nothing?"† This may be called the
infanity of despotism. I shall now state, from the same work,
a few examples of the way in which this revenue is collected.
" A man in Skye, who had got a load of *banded* salt, used
" the whole in curing fish, save *five* bushels only, but before
" he could recover his bond, he found himself obliged to hire
" a boat and send these five bushels to Oban, which cost him
" upwards of *five* pounds expences."‡

* Introduction, page 65.

† Ibid p. 65.

‡ Report p. 40.

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“ One would imagine, that if a man *paid the duty for his salt*, he might afterwards do with it what he pleased ; but this I find is not the case. Last season (1784), a vessel was fitted out in haste, at Aberdeen, to catch herrings, that were then on the coast. But as the owners of that vessel had no duty-free salt, they were obliged to purchase salt that had already *paid the duty* ; but before they were allowed to carry one ounce of this salt to sea, they were further obliged to *give bond for it*, in the same form as if it had been duty-free salt.”*

“ Again, in the year 1783, Mr. James M'Donald, in Portree, in Skye, purchased from Leith, a quantity of salt, which had paid duty, and shipped it by permit on board a vessel for Portree. It was regularly landed, and a custom-house certificate returned for the same. With this salt he intended to cure fish, when he could catch them in those seas ; but not having found an opportunity of using it in the year 1784, he fitted out, at his own expence, this season (1785), a small sloop, to prosecute the fisheries. On board that sloop, he put some part of this salt with the permit along with it. A revenue cutter fell in with his vessel, and *seized vessel and salt, provisions and all together!*”†

There is an excise duty upon foreign salt, imported into the Western Islands, of ten shillings *per* bushel, besides a custom-house tax of about two pence three farthings.‡ The excise duty is too high to be paid for salt employed in the curing of fish. Government, therefore, in order to encourage the British fisheries, has promised to remit the excise duty. But it is possible that the salt thus disburdened of the ten shillings of excise, might be applied to some other purpose than that of curing fish, and in this way, the intended bounty might be converted into a source of fraud against the excise revenue. When the legislature, therefore, granted this indulgence, “ all im-

* Report p. 41.

† Ibid p. 41.

‡ On Scots salt, the duty is one shilling and six pence per bushel, on foreign salt ten shillings. The latter is chiefly consumed by the bullocks.

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" porters of foreign salt were required first to land it at a cus-
 " tom-house, where it was to be carefully weighed by the pro-
 " per officers, and the importer either to pay the duty, or to
 " enter it *for the purpose of curing fish*, and in that case, to
 " give bond, with two sufficient sureties, either to pay the ex-
 " cise duty of ten shillings *per bushel*, or *to account for the salt*,
 " under a penalty of twenty shillings *per bushel*. In conse-
 " quence of this bond, he must either *produce the salt itself at*
 " *that custom-house* on or before the 5th of April thereafter,
 " or cured fish in such quantities as are sufficient to ex-
 " haust the whole salt; which fish, he is obliged to declare
 " upon oath were cured with the salt for which he had granted
 " bond. It is only after all these forms, *and several others* are
 " duly complied with, that the bond can be got up; and these
 " bonds, if not cancelled *before they fall due*, must be regularly
 " returned to the commissioners of salt duties, by whom an
 " action must be *instantly* commenced in the court of exche-
 " quer, for recovery of the penalties incurred in the bonds.
 " If any of this salt remains unused, a new bond on the same
 " terms must be granted for it, however small the quantity
 " may be, nor can that salt be moved from the place where it
 " is once lodged, without an express warrant from the custom-
 " house, and another bond granted by the proprietor, specify-
 " ing, under heavy penalties, where it is to be landed; which
 " bond can only be withdrawn in consequence of a certificate
 " from the custom-house specifying that it was there lodged.
 " Nor can it be shifted from one vessel to another, did both
 " vessels even *belong to the same person*, without an order
 " from the custom-house, and a new bond granted; nor can
 " a single bushel of that salt, in any circumstance, be sold
 " without a new bond being granted for it, and a transfer of
 " that quantity being made in the custom-house books."*
 This passage paints, in striking colours, the gloomy and fero-
 cious jealousy of English despotism. An eternal repetition of
 of the word *bond*, may assure us, that the act of parliament

* Report by Dr. Anderson, page 36.

has been dictated by the very genius of Shylock. These regulations are attended with so much expence, and intricacy, and so great a hazard of ruinous penalties, that in many cases, they correspond to an absolute prohibition. In England, a fisherman grants bond but *once* : * a distinction that ascertains the pitiful malevolence of our *sister* kingdom. To give a proper comprehension of all the clogs with which the Scots fisheries, and *they only* are burdened, would require several sheets of paper. A few particulars may serve at present, as a specimen of the rest.

“ If a vessel containing salt is lost at sea, or at the fishing, “ proof must be made of its being so lost, before the salt bond “ can be recovered; and in some cases, the commissioners are “ so scrupulous with respect to this proof, as to render it next “ to impossible to recover the bond, or avoid the penalty it “ contains.”† These bonds cost, each of them, seven shillings and six pence. As an instance of the rigour of the commissioners, Dr. Anderson tells the following story.

A bus on the fishing station was cast away. The master went to a justice of peace in the neighbourhood, and made oath to the loss of his vessel, with the salt, &c. on board, *but not having saved his papers*, he committed a mistake of five or six bushels in stating the quantity of salt. His deposition, signed by the justice, was transmitted to the commissioners, for recovery of the salt bond. On account of the *error*, it was returned, to be altered. The man then went before two justices, and made oath to the *exact* quantity. This deposition was transmitted; but returned again as insufficient, for the law requires that it should be made before a quorum of justices at *their quarter sessions*. By this time, the ship-master had gone to sea to the fishery. Dr. Anderson adds, that it was a *thousand to one* if he had not either to pay the penalty of his bond, or lose a season of the fishing; as he could not, when at sea, be certain of attending at the precise day of the quarter sessions.‡

* Illustrations of the report, page 178.

† Ibid, p. 174.

‡ Ibid, p. 176.

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d, p. 174.

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Such is the treatment of a shipwrecked mariner from Scots commissioners of salt duties! When this transaction happened, the *sympathetic* Dr. Adam Smith was a member of that quintumvirate, who sway the sceptre of salt excise in North-Britain.

“ No vessel can lend or give salt to any other at the fishing
“ or otherwise, even though *belonging to the same owners*, be-
“ cause the quantity shipped *per coquet* in any vessel must be
“ regularly landed at some custom house or other, either in fish
“ or not used; and if it must be lent, must be so landed and
“ bonded, and again shipped *per coquet* anew. If lent other-
“ wise, the salt and vessel are seizable.”* This author ob-
serves, that a bare list of the prosecutions, which have been
raised in Scotland, on account of the salt tax, would excite hor-
ror. The most trifling mistake, in point of form, is sufficient
for reducing an industrious family to beggary; yet in England,
when the committee of fisheries required a list of the prosecu-
tions that had been raised in that country since the institution of
this law, the return was only ONE.†

In consequence of so harsh a system, salt is smuggled in im-
mense quantities from Ireland, where the duty is but three-
pence per bushel. A person confessed, that, in a single year,
he imported into one of the western islands, *nine hundred and*
seventy tons of salt, which are equal to *thirty-eight thousand*
eight hundred and ninety bushels. Several other people in the
same island followed that trade.‡ If the formalities on the re-
mission of salt duties, did not defeat the whole intention of the
law, there could be no temptation to this traffic. Dr. Ander-
son affirms, as a certain fact, that *five hundred thousand people*
in Scotland use no salt but that of Ireland. He tells us also,
on the subject of custom house duties, in general, that he once
paid thirteen shillings for leave to send coast-ways forty shillings
worth of oat-meal.§ Though the customs, in the nine most
northern counties of Scotland, cannot defray the expence of col-

* Illustrations of the report, page 175.

† Ibid p. 191.

‡ Report, page 47.

§ Introduction, p. 67.

lecting them, yet they are in themselves, very exorbitant, when compared with the value of the commodities on which they are paid. Bonds, certificates, and other trash of that kind, cost as much on a small cargo as on a large one. Dr. Anderson was assured, that in the Hebrides "the expence of the custom house officer to discharge a cargo of coals, amounts, in many cases, to more than four times the duty on the coals, and if the cargo be small, it will sometimes double the prime cost."* The officer is to be brought from a distance of perhaps thirty miles, at an expence which the parties must always defray out of their own pockets. This information explains another of his assertions, that those poor people, the Scots Highlanders, "pay at least five hundred per cent. more than the merchants in London, Liverpool, or Bristol, would have paid for the same goods."†

The subject of the Scots fisheries has already extended to some length. It shall be resumed and closed in the next chapter. For the sake of variety, and as a relief to the feelings of the reader, let us for the present, make a short excursion into the more elevated regions of legislative iniquity.

Some people are in the habit of revering an act of parliament, as though it were the production of a superior being. To this class of readers may be recommended a perusal of the following anecdote. In summer 1789, when the bill for an excise on the manufacture of tobacco, was brought up to the house of peers, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow "treated the enacting part of it with a high degree of mixed asperity and contempt. He said, that the vexatious precautions and preventive security of the excise laws, were unnecessarily‡ extended to the subject in question; that a fit attention had not been paid to the essential interests and property of the manufacturers; that the greater part of the enacting clauses were absurd, contradictory, ungrammatical, and unintelligible! He expres-

* Introduction p. 32.

† Ibid, p. 66.

‡ This expression intimates, that in the opinion of Thurlow, tobacco is an improper object of excise. He was in the right; for the tax produced a scene of stupendous injustice. A full account of it shall be given hereafter.

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" fed his wishes, that the house of commons, if they meant to
" persevere in their claim of having money bills returned from
" the house of peers unaltered, would not insult them, by re-
" quiring their adoption of laws *that would disgrace school*
" *boys.*"* He accordingly moved for an amendment, which
was rejected by a majority of *ten voices against seven.. So no-*
tably was the business of the nation attended! The house of
peers consisted at that time, including bishops, of about two
hundred and fifty-nine members, so that this was just like one
juryman presuming to do the office of fifteen. The bill how-
ever had been so wretchedly constructed, that an alteration ap-
pearing absolutely necessary, was urged a second time by the
Duke of Richmond and carried. But before this could be ac-
complished, the parliament were just rising. The house of
commons had not time to think of their pretended constituents.
The alterations were suppressed, and the bill, with all its im-
perfections on its head, was discharged on the devoted tobac-
conists of Britain. If that parliament had been selected from
the cells of Newgate, they could not have acted, in this affair,
with a more atrocious contempt for every part of their duty.

There is no greater absurdity in what is called our constitu-
tion than this, that the mere shreds and ballast of a British par-
liament have often executed, or betrayed its most important
duties. The house of commons consists of five hundred and fif-
ty-eight persons, including the forty-five make-weight Scots
members. Of all these, forty form a quorum, and an hundred,
or even fifty or sixty, have frequently transacted the most in-
teresting affairs. In the new constitution of the United States
of America, a very obvious and a very effectual remedy has been
provided against this abuse. By the fifth section of the first arti-
cle, it is enacted, that " a majority of each house shall constitute
" a quorum to do business." The constitution of America is
not like ours, a dream floating through the libraries of lawyers,
and the imaginations of unprincipled place-hunters. It has

* Doddsley's Annual Register for 1789, p. 157.

been reduced to an instrument of only ten or fifteen pages, composed by men of sense, and on a subject which they had studied and digested. We return to the *Queen of Isles*.

In the reign of William the third, one Tilly obtained an act of parliament to enable Bromshill, an infant, to sell his interest in the Fleet prison; which interest was purchased by Tilly. A report was sometime after made in the house of commons, which contains these words. " Mr. Pocklington, from the committee on the abuses of prisons, &c, among a variety of other matter, reported to the house, that one Brunshill, a solicitor had informed the said committee, that Tilly, as he was informed, should say, that he obtained that act *by bribery and corruption*."

" That one Mrs. Hancock applying to Tilly not to protect one Guy, being his clerk of the papers, because he was perjured, &c. Tilly refused her request; upon which being asked how he would do, if the matter should be laid before parliament? he replied, *he could do what he would there*; that they were *a company of bribed villains*; that to his knowledge, they *would all take bribes*; and that it cost him three hundred pounds for his share, and three hundred pounds for the other shop, meaning the King's Bench, for *bribing a committee last parliament*."

" That she then intimated that she must then apply to the house of lords; he answered, it was only *palming five or six talking lords*, and they would quash all the rest. And she then said she would try the king and council; he added, the best of the lord-keeper's fees were from *him*; that as to the judges, they were all such a parcel of rogues, that *they would swallow his gold* faster than he would give it them; and that as to the members of the house of commons, they were many of them *members of his house*." * This picture seems unfavourable; but the parliaments of William the Third were chiefly composed of very exceptionable characters. An example or two as to their general conduct may serve at present.

* On the use and abuse of parliaments, vol. I p. 126.

In 1694, William planned an expedition against Breſt. The particulars were betrayed to James the Second, by letters from England. In conſequence of this intelligence, the French prepared for the reception of their aſſailants. A body of Engliſh land forces were diſembarked at Breſt. They perceived ſuch formidable entrenchments, and batteries, that they attempted to retreat on board their ſhips. But the tide had gone out; the flat bottomed boats were entangled in the mud; and the French, with ſuperior forces, poured from every ſide upon the fugitives. Six hundred of thoſe who landed were ſlain, and many wounded; one Dutch frigate was ſunk, after loſing almoſt her whole crew. General Talmarch, commander in the expedition, died of his wounds at Plymouth. Sir John Dalrymple, in attempting to deſcribe the particulars of this tranſaction, ſeems to labour under an idea of guilt and infamy, which the weakneſs of human language is incapable of expreſſing. He ſays, that the “intention was betrayed to the late king, by intelligence in the “ſpring from Lord Godolphin, firſt Lord of the Treafury, “and afterwards by a letter from Lord Marlborough, eldeſt “lieutenant-general in the ſervice, of date the 4th of May, in “the ſame way as a project againſt Toulon *was betrayed two “years afterwards by Lord Sunderland.”** The letter from Marlborough was tranſmitted to France by Sackfield, a Britiſh major-general. A copy of it has been publiſhed by Mr. Macpherſon.† In this epiſtle, Marlborough complains, that Ruſſel, though he knew the plan, *always denied it.* “This, ſaid he, “gives me a bad ſign of this man’s intentions.” His fears were groundleſs, for Ruſſel himſelf was in a private correſpondence with James, who had given inſtructions “to him, the Duke “of Leeds, the Lords Shrewſbury, Godolphin and Marlborough, *and others,* to create delays in the fitting out of the “fleet.”‡ Talmarch, or Talmache, for his name is differently ſpelt, had himſelf once been in private connections with the

* Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 3d.

† State Papers, quarto edition, vol. I. page 487.

‡ Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 3d.

friends

friends of James, and when dying, complained, that he had fallen by the treachery of his countrymen. * The facts stated in this narrative are authenticated by the correspondence of the parties, which is still extant in the hand writings of some of themselves. † Ruffel "and others," might as well have cut the throats of Talmache and his men, in Smith-field market, About the end of the reign of Queen Anne, Harley, earl of Oxford, found it convenient to pretend an attachment to the family of Stuart. He obtained the original letter from Marlborough to James the second; and as the Duke had begun to be troublesome, Harley gave him notice that this letter had been procured, and consequently that his life was in danger. The Duke immediately retired from England. ‡ His share in betraying the Brest expedition is less criminal than a practice urged against him by Earl Pawlet, who once told him to his face in the house of peers, "that he sacrificed his officers in "desperate assaults, *for the sake of selling their commissions.*" § This was the great Duke of Marlborough, for such we continue to call him. In the landing of the British troops at Brest, the Marquis of Caermarthen behaved with great bravery, while his own father, Lord Caermarthen, was along with Ruffel and Co. betraying the country.

The following detail exhibits perfidy of a different species. In 1696, the public credit of England had sunk very greatly. To relieve it, parliament, by the persuasion of Mr. Montague, chancellor of the exchequer, permitted him to issue exchequer bills to the extent of two millions and seven hundred thousand pounds. To encourage the currency of these bills, "it had "been provided, that from the date of their being paid upon "taxes into the exchequer, they should be entitled to seven "and an half per cent, of interest." || The legal interest of

* Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland. Part III. book 3d.

† The instructions by James about retarding the expedition to Brest, are published by Mr. Macpherson in his State papers. vol. I. p. 456.

‡ Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, part III. book 3.

§ Smollet's History of Queen Anne.

|| Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 4.

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money was at that time six per cent. To raise the interest of a bill by one and an half, it was only requisite that the holder should indorse it to some friend, who would present it at a custom-house or excise office, and then, though its merit in having circulated, the next indorsee, who accepted it from the exchequer was entitled, instead of six, to the seven and an half per cent. of interest. This appears to have been the scope of the scheme. The process was plain and profitable; and if Montague had been ambitious of transforming the whole British nation into paper-jobbers, he could not have devised a more dexterous expedient. We may be quite certain that every bill, when first issued from the exchequer, would return with the velocity of lightning. But the most beautiful part of the transaction is yet in reserve. "Mr. Duncombe, and Mr. Knight, Receiver-General of the Excise, both members of the house, and others like them, officers of the revenue, put false endorsements on many of the bills before they had been circulated at all; by which Duncombe acquired a fortune of four hundred thousand pounds."* The sum is either exaggerated, or the value of the exchequer bills must have exceeded two millions and seven hundred thousand pounds, for even on the whole of the latter sum, a profit of one and an half per cent. comes only to forty thousand five hundred pounds. Perhaps Duncombe and his associates had been guilty of other practices of the same kind, and his share of the total plunder may have amounted to four hundred thousand pounds. "It was proved that he had owned the truth of the complaint. (A very gentle kind of term for forgery.) They (Knight and Duncombe) were both expelled the house, and a bill passed the commons to fine Mr. Duncombe (in) half his estate; but it was rejected in the house of lords by the casting vote of the Duke of Leeds." About two years before, this inestimable peer had been impeached by the house of commons for receiving, from the governors of the East-India company, a bribe of five thousand guineas. This money had been kept

* Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 4.

for

for about a year and an half; and, according to evidence, delivered at the bar of the house, it was then returned to the witness, "because the Duke's servant's getting it was *making a noise* *." This nobleman was at that very time lord president of his majesty's most honourable privy council, and betraying to James the second the project of the Brex expedition. We need not then scruple much to believe Sir John Dalrymple, when he says, that, in the case of Duncombe, "*private money was* suspected to have had influence with a number of the peers." Lord Chesterfield had some reason for terming that house an hospital of *incurables*. By the statute law of England, Duncombe, and all his confederates, ought to have suffered death; but it is difficult to hang a man with four hundred thousand pounds in his pocket.

In 1695, Sir John Fenwick, a major-general, had been engaged with some others, in a project for a rebellion in England, and had on its discovery, fled. Some time after he returned, was found out, and arrested. To save his life, he transmitted to William an account of the treasonable correspondence of Godolphin, Marlborough, Russel, and other *wigs of distinction* with James. His accusation "is now known to have been in "all points *true*;" and as there was only *one* evidence against him, of his share in the conspiracy, "he could not be convicted in a court of law, which required *two*." William was thoroughly acquainted with the real character of the persons thus accused by Fenwick; but he durst not come to an open rupture with such powerful offenders. The charge was therefore smothered; but the persons, whom Fenwick had accused, "believed that they could not be safe *as long as he lived*." A bill of attainder was therefore brought into parliament against him, and his late friend Russel appeared at the head of the prosecution. The bill passed through the house of commons by an hundred and eighty-nine voices against an hundred and fifty-six. In the upper house, it had only a majority of seven. Gilbert Burnet, that *right reverend father in God*,

* Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, part III. book 3.

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by a long speech, "exhausted all the chicanery of the law, and
"all the *hypocrisy of the church*, to vindicate proceedings,
"which exceeded the injustice of the worst precedents of
"Charles the second, and his successor. But by a mixture of
"vanity and shame, although he inserted the speech in his
"history he did not avow that he was the person who made it."
On the 28th of January, 1696, Sir John Fenwick was, "*with-
out evidence or law*," beheaded on Tower-Hill! Lady
Fenwick having feared the testimony of a person, she attempted
to bribe him to fly the kingdom. The accusers directed this
wretch to place people behind a curtain to overhear the offer;
"and this attempt of a wife to save her husband's life from
"danger, was turned into an evidence of his guilt."* These
are the words of an historian, who is himself a professed *whig*,
who has been a lawyer, and is now a judge. It appears, there-
fore, that in the close of the last century, the majority of a
British parliament committed a deliberate murder; and that
they did so under the pretence of punishing a conspirator, while
at the same time, a considerable number of themselves were
partners in his guilt. Contrasted with so black a scene, there
is nothing remarkable in the ruin of British tobacco-nists, or in
the accusation so bluntly advanced by the keeper of the Fleet-
prison. The king himself, when he consented to this bill,
must have been altogether conscious of its criminality; but
specks of that kind cannot tarnish the purity of so luminous a
character.

Since the Norman conquest, England has been governed,
including Oliver Cromwell, by thirty-three sovereigns; and of
these, two-thirds were, each of them, by an hundred different
actions, deserving of the gibbet,† Yet the people, over whom
they ruled, seem to have been, for the most part, quite worthy

* Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. Book 7.

† Edward II. Richard II. and Henry VI. appear to have been peaceable men. They were all murdered. Edward VI. is supposed, when a boy, to have shared the same fate. Of Edward VI. the exit is not free from suspicion. Queen Anne was, upon the whole, a harmless woman, and every Englishman acknowledges with gratitude and with pride, that the virtues of the house of Brunswick transcend all praise.

of

of such masters, and have been as perfectly divested of every honourable feeling, *as majesty itself*. In evidence of this truth let us examine the history of a circumstance in the reign of Charles the Second, that provoked more than usual indignation. At that time, there existed no national debt; but when the parliament had voted supplies, it was common for bankers and wealthy individuals, to advance money to the exchequer, on the faith of repayment, when the produce of the grants thus voted came into the public treasury. On the 2d of January, 1672, the exchequer was indebted to the bankers and others in the amount of one million, three hundred and twenty-eight thousand, five hundred and twenty six pounds; and on this day, Charles suspended payment. A bankruptcy, for ten times that sum, would not affect, with an equal degree of ruin, the present commerce of England. The king, however, charged his hereditary revenue with the legal interest of this sum at six *per cent.* and this was actually and regularly paid, till about a year before his death, when it was stopped. As he advanced the interest with punctuality for so long a time, we may candidly judge that his failure in the end arose from necessity. Sir John Sinclair says, that the shutting up of the exchequer "will forever stamp the character of Charles the second with *the most indelible infamy*."*. His character was, upon a thousand other emergencies, so completely *stumped*, that any single crime could have added little to the account. But the point in question is to prove, that in this very affair, Charles, bad as he was, behaved with greater honesty than *any body else*. Nay, he positively acted with ten thousand times more regard to justice than Lord Somers, who is commonly reputed to have been the most virtuous and immaculate personage in the sanctified corps of revolution whigs. When Charles could no longer pay the interest of the money, the unfortunate creditors attempted, but in vain, to interest the legislature in their behalf. "They were at last obliged to maintain their rights in the courts of justice. The suit was protracted for *about twelve years* in

* History of the public revenue, par. II. chap. 3.

“ the courts below, but judgment was obtained against the
 “ crown, about the year 1697. The decision, however, was
 “ set aside by Lord Somers, then chancellor ; though it is said
 “ that ten out of the twelve judges, whom he had called to his
 “ assistance, were of a different opinion. The cause was at last
 “ carried by appeal to the house of lords, by whom the decree
 “ of the chancellor was reversed ; and the patentees would of
 “ course have received *the annual interest contained in the*
 “ *original letters patent*, had not an act passed *anno* 1699, by
 “ which, in lieu thereof, it was enacted, that after the 25th
 “ of December, 1705, the hereditary revenue of excise should
 “ stand charged with the annual payment of *THREE per cent.*
 “ for the principal sum contained in the said letters patent,
 “ subject nevertheless to be redeemed upon the payment of a
 “ moiety thereof, or six hundred and sixty-four thousand, two
 “ hundred and sixty-three pounds.” *

The good people of Britain speak with as much fluency of French and Spanish treachery, as if we had engrossed in our own persons the whole integrity of the human race. Yet it will be difficult to find a single transaction, in any age, that more thoroughly blackens the character of an entire nation than the robbery of these creditors. The perfidy of Charles himself is forgot in the superior blaze of subsequent scoundrelism. First, the flaming parliamentary patriots of that time refused to trouble themselves about the matter ; though *their* piety was so deeply alarmed by the prospect of a Popish successor to the crown. In the second place, the claim became a question in *the courts below*. That the re-payment of this thirteen hundred thousand pounds should ever have been an object of hesitation at all, was, in itself, an utter disgrace to the whole system of English jurisprudence. The law-suit lasted for *twelve years*. During this time, and while the court of London rolled in luxury, many of the creditors must have gone to jail, or at least, many subordinate creditors, whom the former, in consequence of this fraud, were unable to satisfy. An immense

* History of the public revenue, part II. chap. 3.

number of families must have been reduced to beggary; and a croud of honest fathers and husbands must have died of a broken heart. At length a decision was obtained, and approved by ten out of the twelve judges. The creditors were to receive the annual interest of their money. Why they should not have been warranted to recover the principal sum itself, must remain among other secrets of the deep. A thousand racked bankrupts rejoiced in the prospect of restitution,

Till at the last, a cruel spoiler came,
Cropt this fair flower, and rifled all its sweetness.

The decision was reversed by Somers, the lord chancellor, a sage, who exhibited in his own person the very focus of whig-virtue.* This conduct reminds us of the proverb, that *the receiver is as bad as the thief*. Charles paid the interest of the money as long as he could. Somers would pay nothing. It is therefore indisputable that, of the two rogues, the *receiver* was in this instance, by much the greater. The house of lords reversed so scandalous a decree, but mark what follows. An act of parliament was immediately passed, which in opposition to every principle of law, of justice, and of decency, interfered with the decision of a judicial court. To consummate the infamy of the English house of peers, they consented as legislators, to the reversal of their own decision as *judges*, thus demonstrating their invulnerable contempt for all vestige of reputation. In the end, payment was delayed for more than five, additional years, and then, the *half* of the legal interest was be-

* "One of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unapproached, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly. All the traditional accounts of him, the historians of the last age, and its best authors, represent him as *the most uncorrupt lawyer and the honestest statesman*, as a master orator, a genius of the finest taste, and as a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views: as a man who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity." Catalogue of royal and noble authors by Horace Walpole. ART. SOMERS. The writer proceeds in a rhapsody of five pages to the same purpose. He appeals to the historians and the best authors of the last age. It is likely that none of these encomiasts had been creditors to the English exchequer, in the reign of Charles the Second. But the panegyrics of all mankind cannot convert an act of arrant robbery into an act of justice. The historians to whom Mr. Walpole appeals, prove nothing but how vitely the British annals have commonly been composed.

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gun to be paid annually, but redeemable on refunding *half* of the sum originally stolen. The reader will observe in what kind of milk and water stile Sir John Sinclair has related this story. He has made a subsequent but small mistake, in saying that the creditors were kept for *twenty-five* years out of their money. From a year before the death of Charles the Second,* to the 25th of December, 1705, is a period of less than *twenty-three* years. At six *per cent.* of compound interest, a sum doubles itself once in eleven years, and three hundred and thirty-one days, or twice, in twenty-three years and about ten months. For the sake of round numbers, let us reduce the original debt to thirteen hundred thousand pounds, and suppose that it doubled twice during the time when payment of interest was suspended. At this rate, the merchants had in December, 1705, lost five millions and two hundred thousand pounds sterling, besides their expences in a lawsuit of twelve years. In compensation, parliament granted them an annuity of three *per cent.* on the original debt, that is to say, *thirty-nine thousand eight hundred and fifty-five pounds, seventeen shillings and seven pence sterling.* At six *per cent.* the annual interest of five millions and two hundred thousand pounds amounted to three hundred and twelve thousand pounds. Thus parliament gave somewhat more than an *eighth* part of what the merchants had actually lost. We now see that the felonious ravages of an English government are not restricted to Scots Highlanders. With such a gulph of iniquity yawning on every side, we are tempted to think ourselves perusing the Tyburn Chronicle. The real cause for shutting up the exchequer was yet more disreputable than the act itself. Charles had declared war against the Dutch, for the same reason that a Dey of Algiers declares it.† The contest had cost more than five millions sterling.

* He died on the 6th of February, 1684.

† "The wars which the king entered into against the Dutch, were principally with a view of *plundering a wealthy*, and as he imagined a *defenceless* neighbour." History of the public revenue, part I. chap. 9. The war, begun by the commonwealth of England against Holland, in 1652, was likewise unprovoked by the latter. In these three quarrels more lives were lost, and more mischief done, than has been committed

sterling. His parliament refused to relieve him from the pressure of some of the expences. The king offered to make any man treasurer, who would remove his necessities. Clifford embraced the proposal, and the exchequer was closed. The Dutch wars were infinitely more criminal than even this action, but these were only piracies abroad; the other was piracy at home; and for that reason only has it been condemned. In 1655, Oliver Cromwell, without either provocation or pretence, attacked Spain; and we still celebrate the Algerine victories of admiral Blake over the fleets of that injured country, which proves that the nation has not yet acquired more wisdom or honesty, than its ancestors. A very modern example of profligacy shall close this chapter.

Sixty thousand pounds were granted by parliament to George the Third, that he might be enabled to make an establishment for his eldest son. Fifty thousand pounds a year were likewise bestowed upon this young man for his personal expences. An hundred and eighty one thousand pounds have since been assigned by parliament for his works at Carleton-house, and for the discharge of debts which he had contracted notwithstanding his pension of fifty thousand pounds a year. * Ten thousand pounds *per annum*, like a drop in the bucket, were also added to his allowance, that he might never be under the necessity of incurring new debts. It is said however, that the sum thus entrusted, was never applied to the discharge of his debts; and at least one circumstance is certain, that the prince of Wales continues to be on the wrong side of the hedge, by many hundred thousands of pounds. A gentleman, who had the best access to information, hath privately stated them to be at least a million sterling. It is reported, that great numbers of London tradesmen have been compelled to shut up their shops, in con-

committed by all the corsairs of Barbary ever since, and yet we pretend to call these people *pirates*, while the far more extensive enormities of the British navy, are burnished into pages of heroism. In the practice of sea-robbery England has exceeded every other nation. Vid. some account of these three wars, *infra*, chap. 6th.

• History of the public revenue, part III. chap. 2.

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sequence of their unfortunate connection with this bankrupt. His stud of horses has more than once been sold for much less than these animals originally cost him. The task of recording his exploits, must be reserved for the pen of some future Suetonius. At the present time (September, 1792,) it may be safely computed, that in one shape or other, he has expended for the nation eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. We may compare this mode of exhausting the public treasury, with that employed in the highlands of Scotland to replenish it.

On a subject so hateful, there can be no pleasure to expatiate. Indeed, the taste of the nation runs in a very opposite channel. We can hardly open a newspaper, without meeting a rhapsody on the virtues and abilities of the prince of Wales. His admirers, like the spaniel that licks the foot raised to kick him, are not contented with general praise. They tell us, in transports of exultation, that he gave a thousand guineas for "an admirable snuff-box;" that, upon a late birth-day, he appeared at court in a suit of cloaths, which, including diamonds, cost eighty thousand pounds; that he bought a race-horse for fifteen hundred guineas, and sold him for seventy pounds; that he was present sometime ago at a boxing match, where a shoemaker was struck dead with a single blow; and that he drove a lady round St. James's Park, or that she drove him, no matter which, in a phaeton, with four black ponies.†

For these inestimable services, the nation has paid eight hundred thousand pounds; a sum lost in the bottomless pit of Carleton house. How many future millions are, like Curtius, to be swallowed up in the same gulph, time only can determine.

* It is very generally whispered and believed, that an *illustrious* personage shot one of his footmen dead with a pistol, for disrespect to a woman. If this be true, the life of Dr. Philip Withers has not been the only sacrifice at that shrine; nor will Morocco be in future the only country in the world governed by an executioner.

In the London Chronicle, I read, many years ago, an article stating, that a very young naval officer, *whose name was inserted at full length*, had stabbed one of his servants. There was never any farther notice in the newspapers of this story; but I have since learned, that the man died of his wound; and that a sailor on board of the ship where the murder was committed, underwent a sham trial for it, and was discharged.

Since this country had the honour of establishing a household for the prince of Wales, we have been burdened with additional taxes upon snuff and tobacco, on paper, advertisements, leather, perfumery, horses, attornies, batchelors, stage-coaches, gloves, hats, male and female servants, * pedlars and shop-keepers; upon windows, candles, medicines, bills and receipts; upon newspapers and partridges; and if any thing can be yet more impertinent or oppressive, on births, burials and legacies; besides other impositions beyond the retention of perhaps the strongest memory. Now, it is remarkable, that ten of these taxes might be selected, which, by their nett produce, could not, in whole, have discharged the expences of this single private person. We are incessantly deafened about our obligations to the house of Guelph. It would be but candid to state an estimate of their obligations to us, and to strike the balance.

In North-America, there are sometimes found the bones of a carnivorous quadruped, which must have been, when alive, three or four times larger than the elephant. This animal, which may likely have been amphibious, appears now to be extirpated. Perhaps it perished from an impossibility of obtaining adequate subsistence. A forest thirty leagues in length would have been insufficient to furnish food for so formidable a guest. It is possible, that *the species of king* may, one day, come to be extirpated for a similar reason. The gluttony of the mammoth, devouring six buffaloes for a breakfast, bears no proportion to the ordinary extent of royal rapacity. Two hundred families of sovereigns, like those of France or England, would, of themselves, be sufficient for consuming the whole revenues of Europe.

In the course of a century, from the revolution to Michaelmas, 1788, the pilots of our most excellent constitution, have received into the British exchequer, one thousand millions, six hundred and forty-four thousand, one hundred and fifty-four pounds sterling. † It will be hard to prove, that even a twen-

* The latter tax ought to have been entitled a receipt for female idleness, theft, and prostitution.

† History of the public revenue. Part III, chap. I.

tieth part of this money has been expended on wise or useful purposes. To this we must add the charge of collecting the revenue for the same period, which on a medium, can be guessed at six hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. This rate extends, in an hundred years, to sixty millions of pounds sterling, debursed for the invaluable exploits of custom-house and excise officers. Such a sum, at a compound interest of five *per cent*. computing from the respective dates of its annual expenditure, would, by this time, have been large enough to buy up, in fee simple, the British islands, with the last acre, and the last guinea that they contain.

CHAPTER II.

Fertility of the Hebrides—Islay—Its prodigious Improvement—Immense abundance of fish—Miserable effects of excise—Salt and coal duties—Specimen of Scots sinecures.

WE have, in the last chapter, learned some of the circumstances that prevent the improvement of Scots fisheries. We shall now return to that subject, by a farther examination of Dr. Anderson's performance. Other writers have cast light on this question, and well deserve to be quoted. But the present work embraces an immense multiplicity of objects; and hence, it becomes requisite to condense and abridge our materials. There is not to be expected, in this place, a compleat account of the situation of the inhabitants of the northern counties, and in the islands of Scotland. A few interesting facts only will be stated; some shocking abuses of government will be exhibited; and the obvious reflections will be submitted to the public. By a sketch of this kind, the spirit of curiosity and of enquiry may perhaps be excited; and then every person is able, at his own convenience, to make himself master of the case.

This may be resolved into three points, the natural advantages of the country itself, the miserable consequences resulting from the tyranny of parliament, and the numerous benefits that would arise from an honest and beneficent administration.

It has commonly been supposed, that the Hebrides, were barren and unfit for agriculture. On the contrary, Dr. Anderson states, that they contain extensive fields of unusual fertility. Many tracts which have never been ploughed are capable to produce corn, and to supply subsistence for a multitude of people. Arran excepted, which is very mountainous, the western islands are for the most part level. Tiree, for example, is one continued plain of fine arable land, with only two small hills. The west side of Barra, of Uist, and of Harris, and the whole of the islands between these, as well as the north-west side of Lewis, are low lands. They are one entire bed of shell-sand, and extremely fruitful. Dr. Anderson, who is himself a farmer of experience, observes, that the fields of shell-sand, when well cultivated, and properly manured with seaweed, give crops of barley, which cannot, as he imagines, be equalled in any part of Europe. He adds, that were he to specify the particulars, they would not obtain credit. The crops of pease and rye are very luxuriant: and he supposes that turnips, lucerne, sainfoin, and wheat, might be raised in as great perfection there, as any where in this quarter of the world. Lime-stone, marl, and shell-sand, *are every where to be met with in great plenty.* The islands of Cannay and Egg, consist of several rows of basaltic columns raised one above each other. The ground is not level, but the soil is very fertile. The rocks of Lismore consist entirely of lime-stone, and the land is fruitful, even to a proverb. The climate of the western islands is more favourable, and the harvest for the most part more early than on the opposite coast of Scotland. During summer, the wind blows commonly from the south-west, and of consequence it is loaded with clouds from the Atlantic. The high lands on the western coasts intercept these clouds, and the rain descends in torrents. But in the islands the ground is low.

low. The clouds pass over them without obstruction. There is usually less rain in summer than the inhabitants would desire. The harvest is more early and more certain than on the continent. In Islay, the crops are commonly secured before the end of September; a more early season than in East Lothain, the best corn country of Scotland. Among the western islands, where the soil is not shell-sand, the surface very frequently consists of mossy earth. When manured with shell-sand, it becomes at once capable of bearing excellent crops of grain. When afterwards laid into grass, it becomes covered with a fine sward, consisting chiefly of white clover, and the poa-grasses; so that this improved soil becomes in future equally adapted for corn or pasture. Those hills which cannot be ploughed, are yet susceptible of the greatest improvement. When covered with that sort of manure which is every where plentiful and inexhaustible, they immediately obtain a fine pile of delicate and perennial grass.

As an evidence of what may be accomplished in the Hebrides, by the joint efforts of industry and judgment, we may consider the proceedings of Walter Campbell, Esquire, of Shawfield, proprietor of Islay. About twelve years before Dr. Anderson came to visit it, this island, like most of the Hebrides, at present, had no roads on which carriages could be drawn, no bridges, no public work of any kind. It contained less than seven thousand people; and it imported annually, between three and four thousand bolls of grain. Thus, if shut out from the rest of the world, the inhabitants must have expired of hunger. They were discontented; and they had begun to emigrate. Their departure was interrupted by the very judicious war against America, which commenced for a duty of three pence *per* pound upon tea, and terminated with an expence of one hundred and thirty-nine millions sterling. Now, let us consider the state of this island in the year 1785. In spite of the intervention of a bloody war, that lasted for seven years and an half out of the twelve, and checked all sorts of improvement in all parts of the empire, the population had

augmented to ten thousand souls. These, instead of importing their subsistence, *exported* annually, about five thousand bolls of grain, three thousand six hundred head of black cattle, between three and four hundred horses, and about thirty-six thousand spindles of yarn, all of their own produce and manufacture. Thirty miles of excellent roads had already been formed. A great number of useful bridges were erected. A well constructed pier had been built. A town was begun; and its inhabitants multiplied with rapidity. Markets were opened for the produce of the land. Large tracts of barren ground were annually brought into culture. The people were industrious and satisfied. This rapid improvement was achieved, in a poor and sequestered island, by the exertions of a single private gentleman.* Hence, it seems evident, that if the rest of Scotland had been governed with equal wisdom, its wealth, population, importance, and felicity, must, at the same time, have increased in a similar proportion. From sixteen hundred thousand people, we should, in twelve years, have multiplied to two millions and three hundred thousand. At the same time, Scotland must have been able to export grain in much greater quantities than what she at present imports. The agriculture of the country must very soon have doubled its productions. The existence of seven hundred thousand additional people, in twelve years only, hath been prevented by the magic wand of five or six hundred custom-house and excise officers.

It is remarkable, that though the *free* government of Britain cannot perform revolutions like that effected by Mr. Campbell, yet a task of this nature has, within our own days,

* Dr. Anderson observed to a friend, that part of the superior good sense of Mr. Campbell arose from his happiness in being born a *younger brother*. He did not obtain the estates of the family till he had reached the maturity of his understanding; when the death of an elder son, without children, put him into possession of them. Such is the ridiculous consequence of the right of primogeniture, that it not only half-beggars the rest of the family, but in two cases out of three, the object of its favour has very great chance for being a blockhead. Every body may remark at a grammar school, that heirs are in general the most idle, ignorant, and vicious of all the boys. Out of these hopeful materials our future parliaments are to be formed.

been executed by one of the most inflexible despots that ever menaced mankind. In the year 1763, the dominions of Frederick the Great had been reduced to the utmost distress. The king himself, in his posthumous memoirs, observes, that "no description, however pathetic, can possibly approach to the deep, the afflicting, the mournful impression, which *the sight of them inspired.*" Among other particulars, he tells us, that they had lost *five hundred thousand inhabitants.* Thirteen thousand houses have been razed from the earth; and the whole nation, from the noble to the peasant, were in rags that hardly covered their nakedness. In about eight years of peace, the breaches of population were perfectly repaired, and the whole country became as flourishing as ever. Thus, what Mr. Campbell acted upon a small scale, was done by Frederick upon a greater. There is no doubt that Scotland itself might be improved as quickly as the island of Islay. For instance, Dr. Anderson remarks, that within the last fifty years, a very great alteration for the better has taken place in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. Many thousand acres of the most barren land that can be conceived, have been converted into excellent corn-fields; and he computes that, in consequence of this change, the rent of this land has been augmented by more than thirty thousand pounds sterling *per annum.* The iron forge at Bunaw gives employment to several families. When they were planted near it, the soil was nothing but a bleak moor with some dwarfish heath. Of this land, several hundred acres are now covered with grass and corn. The steep mountain, at fort William, seemed by nature incapable of improvement, but is now overspread with gardens and corn-fields. To these details by Dr. Anderson, every person may, from his own observation, add others of the same kind. The history of the parish of Portpatrick, in the statistical account of Scotland, affords an instance of how much may be done for a barren corner. What adds to the merit of the improvements in Islay, is, that they were accomplished under the most oppressive system of taxation which can be devised. The proprietor himself has

encountered the most rancorous insolence in carrying on the fishery, not only from the commissioners of the salt duties, but from a petty officer of excise; and if he had not been a very able and powerful man, these harpies might have reduced him to bankruptcy. We must not, therefore, complain of providence, because the Hebrides, and a considerable part of the main land of Scotland, are still in a state of comparative desolation. Industry lingers not for want of a richer soil, or a milder sky, but for want of such a legislator as Frederick sometimes was, and such landlords as Walter Campbell. It is not merely by the quality of the soil, that the Hebrides may become valuable. Mines of lead and copper have been found in Islay; and in Tyree and Skye, quarries of excellent marble have been discovered. Coal has been met with in several places, but a discovery of this nature must be useless unless to the island where it may be dug; because the coasting duty upon coal would effectually prevent its being exported, even to the neighbouring islands. Their inhabitants live in scattered hamlets. They can buy but a small quantity of coals at one time, possibly only half a ton. The expence of bringing an excise officer for thirty miles, perhaps, to inspect the coals, an expence which the parties must pay, would often come, as before observed, to four times the price of the cargo. In the same way, if the natives had any cargo fit for a foreign market, they must, before they can sail, obtain a clearance from the custom-house. This would, in many cases, cost more than the worth of the cargo.

The circumstance by which the Hebrides have as yet been principally distinguished, is that immense quantity of excellent fish that fill the surrounding seas. It is unnecessary here to mention the names of perhaps thirty different kinds, including a great variety of shell-fish; but let us remark the idiotism of the English government, when pretending to remit the salt duties for the sake of encouraging the Scots fisheries. The persons who receive *bonded* salt are not sufficient to catch any fish but herrings. They must carry their men, and boats, their
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nets, and salt, and casks to the fishing ground. They must remain there for three months, and if a shoal of cod or turbot, of haddocks, of mullet, of soal, of flounders, or halybut, comes in their way, they are not at liberty to take them; but are condemned to spend these three months in perfect idleness,* unless they meet with a shoal of herrings. Yet it frequently happens that, but for this prohibition, they could load their vessels with cargos of other fish equally valuable. At the end of three months, they must bring their men, their boats, their nets, their salt, and their casks, back to the custom-house, before their salt bonds can be relieved. If there had been no other fish but herrings in the western seas, an excuse might have been made. But this is not the case. The dog-fish are sometimes to be met with in such vast numbers, that their back fins are seen like a thick bush of sedges above the water, as far as the eye can reach. A boat-load in such a shoal may be caught with a few hand-lines in an hour or two. A valuable oil is extracted from their liver. A fisherman at Islay informed Dr. Anderson, that he frequently baited a line with four hundred hooks, for the smaller flat-fish, and caught at one haul, three hundred and fifty. They consisted of turbot, soal, and large excellent flounders, of two or three pounds weight. As to skate and halybut, he could fill his boat with them, when he chose it, at a single haul. The quantity of herrings that sometimes approach the coast, in one body, almost exceeds belief. In 1773, a shoal came into Loch Terridon. Many hundreds of boats were loaded as oft as the owners thought proper for two months; and the quantity caught in a single night, has been computed, by Dr. Anderson, at nineteen thousand eight hundred barrels. Of the quantities brought ashore upon such occasions, a great part are frequently suffered to putrify, for want of salt to cure them. The remainder are cured exclusively with Irish salt; for, in Dr. Anderson's opinion, as already observed, five hundred thousand people in the north of Scotland employ none else. Thus, on the one hand, the hea-

* Report, p. 43.

vinefs of the tax defeats its own purpofe, and on the other hand, as the smugglers of falt cannot obtain open leave to export their cargoes of fifh, the bufinefs ends in a mere wafte and deftruction. What better indeed was to be expected, when the inhabitants of the weftern iflands came under the domination of an affembly of parasites, at the diftance of two hundred leagues, an affembly who defpife their interefts, abhor their profperity, and are fufficiently difpofed even to exterminate their language? If Galgacus had fubmitted to Julius Agricola, he would not have endured any fuch abfurd defpotifm.

At Loch Carron, about the year 1775, herrings “ were fo
 “ throng, that though the loch, from the narrow entry, is above
 “ a league long, and fome places above a mile broad, and
 “ from fixty to four fathoms deep, it was indifferent to the fifh-
 “ ers whether their nets were near the ground or furface, they
 “ were equally fure to have them loaded. They continued in
 “ this bay for five weeks. On the weft fide of Skye, I am
 “ informed, they once fwarmed fo thick in Caroy loch, and fo
 “ many were caught, that they could not be carried off; and
 “ after the bufles were loaded, and the country round was
 “ ferved, *the neighbouring farmers made them up into compofts,*
 “ *and manured their ground with them the enfuing feafon.*
 “ This fhoe continued many years upon the coaft, but they
 “ were not in every year, nor in every bay, fo thick as this
 “ laft; but were, for a number of years, fo much fo, that all
 “ the bufles made cargoes, and the whole coafts were abundant-
 “ ly ferved.—At Loch Urn, in 1767, or 1768, fuch a quan-
 “ tity *ran on fhore*, that the beach, for four miles round the
 “ head of the loch, was covered with them, from fix to eigh-
 “ teen inches deep; and the ground under water, fo far as it
 “ could be feen at low water, was equally fo. I believe the
 “ whole bay, from the narrow to the mouth, about twelve
 “ miles long, and a league broad, was *full of them*. I am
 “ alfo of opinion, that the ftrongeft fifh being without, in
 “ forcing their way into the inner bay, drove the lighteft and
 “ weakeft on fhore. So thick were thefe laft, that they car-

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" ried before them every other kind of fish they met, even
 " ground-fish, skate, flounders, &c. and perished together."*
 With such inconceivable quantities of fish at home, we can
 be under no necessity for wandering in quest of employment,
 to Greenland, to Newfoundland, to Falkland's islands, or to
 Nootka Sound; and of obtaining a permission for fishing so far
 off, at an expence of three millions sterling. The true cause
 for such conduct is shortly this. At the union, Scotland came
 under the yoke of an ancient enemy, by whom she was equally
 feared and detested; and no advantage to the empire in gene-
 ral could compensate to the pride of England, for the mortifi-
 cation of having promoted Scots opulence.†

In the year 1784, a shoal of herrings came into Loch Urn.
 Mr. M'Donell, of Barrisdale, gave it as his opinion, that in
 the course of seven or eight weeks, a quantity was caught,
 that, if brought to market, would have sold for fifty-six thou-
 sand pounds sterling. Double the quantity might have been
 taken, but for the want of salt and of casks. Were it not for
 the interruption of an excise, and some other obvious causes,
 the fishery business, in that quarter, would be more lucrative
 than any other that a labouring man can follow in any part of
 Britain.‡

These examples prove what immense loads of fish might be
 killed, if the people had a proper supply of salt and of casks for
 curing them, and a suitable market for selling them; so that
 they might be able to continue at the fishery during the whole
 time which it lasted. At present, the mischief that is left un-
 done by the exorbitant excise upon salt, is completed by the
 preposterous terms on which the bounty is granted. When a

* Illustrations of the report, p. 158.

† The present method of paving and lighting the streets of London, is, as an
 improvement, felt in the most sensible manner by all ranks and degrees of peo-
 ple. The plan of this work was borrowed from the high street of Edinburgh, and
 the very stones for the pavement were imported from Scotland. For the personal
 safety of the gentlemen concerned, and their families, these circumstances were
 concealed from the rabble with the strictest caution. The ferocity of vulgar pa-
 triotism would not have suffered the acknowledgement of such an obligation to
 North-Britain, a country, on which they daily exhaust the vocabulary of Billings-
 gate. Vid. Dr. Wendeboyn.

‡ Report, p. 14.

buss has completed her cargo *she must abandon the fishing entirely*; and none of her hands can return to it again in less than eight or ten weeks, before which time the people of the buss might have caught perhaps twenty loadings, *had they been permitted to remain*.

From the complicated and oppressive conditions upon which the bounty offered by parliament has been granted, there is ground to question whether a single penny of it has ever gone into the pockets of the fishermen. First, the bounty would occasion so great an expence to many of the more remote inhabitants of the Hebrides, that they are entirely out of the question. Before a native of the western coasts or islands, can enter himself, even as a private mariner, on board one of those vessels, that apply for the bounty, he must go to Greenock, Rothesay, or Campbellton, and there wait till he is engaged and mustered. If this happens at one of the two former places, he proceeds to Campbellton to be rendezvoused. These marches and countermarches consume a month or six weeks of time, and a great deal of money. At last he returns to the very spot from whence he set out.* Thus it would be impossible for a great part of the western Highlanders, ever to send a buss on such a circuitous voyage, for they would be obliged to dispatch her a second time to the south, to a second rendezvous, and to be at the charge of her making a second return home. She would thus be forced to perform *four* voyages instead of *two*. The door to the pretended bounty, that stoney piece of bread, is, by this means, both shut and bolted. Even to the busses that earn it, the bounty is but a mere delusion. On the eastern coast of Scotland, the custom-house fees, on fitting out such a vessel of thirty tons, are about seven pounds. The bounty is only forty-five pounds. The time wasted in going to a place of rendezvous, before she sails, and at her return, cost a month of delay, and a charge of twenty pounds. Thus, more than one half of the bounty is already sunk. In the second place, she is prohibited from catching any fish but

* Report, p. 44.

herrings.

the fishing entire again in less than people of the bus had they been per-
 lions upon which granted, there is if it has ever gone the bounty would more remote inha-ly out of the ques- islands, can en- board one of those t go to Greenock, ill he is engaged two former places, voused. These h or six weeks of he returns to the t would be impos- sible, ever to send would be obliged a second rendez- g a second return four voyages in- erty, that stoney d bolted. Even a mere delusion. n-house fees, on ut seven pounds, me wasted in go- s, and at her re- twenty pounds, eady sunk. In ing any fish but

herrings. On that account she must have neither lines nor hooks on board. Though surrounded by whales and dogfish, cod, ling, mackarel and other aquatic tribes, that follow the herrings, in vast numbers, the men in these vessels, when herrings do not come in their way, are kept idle for weeks together, while charges multiply on the head of the undertaker.* A third heavy obstruction is, that all the hands in the bus must be mustered at the custom-house, not only before sailing, but *after the vessel returns*. Thus many fishers must be carried back to the rendezvous, who are superfluous for navigating the bus, and who would otherwise be left on the fishing-ground till the end of the season; and this regulation also is very burdensome to the owner. The bounty is thus utterly consumed in complying with a system of regulations, more fantastical than the consulship of Caligula's horse.†

Those Hebrideans who cannot or do not embrace the terms of the bounty, are therefore at liberty to continue at the fishing

* Illustrations of the report, p. 184.

† Foreigners unacquainted with the current style of British conversation, may condemn comparisons like that in the text. Let us hear with what reverence the legislators of this country speak and think of each other.

The earl of Buchan hath just now published the lives of Fletcher, of Salton, and of James Thompson. He there tells us, that he once said to Lord Chatham, "What will become of poor England, that doats on the imperfections of her *pretended* constitution?" Chatham replied, "The gout will dispose of me soon enough to prevent me from feeling the consequences of this *infatuation*; but, *before the end of this century*, either the parliament will reform itself from *within*, or be reformed with a vengeance from *without*." Thus spoke one of the masters of the puppet-show. It is beyond the compass of human language to express the depth of contempt and detestation, couched under these few words.

On the 28th of February, 1785, Edmund Burke addressed the House of Commons, concerning the astonishing composition made with the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot. In this affair, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas were the principals, and he thus describes their conduct. "Let no man hereafter talk of the decaying energies of nature. All the acts and monuments in the records of speculation; the consolidated corruption of ages; the patterns of exemplary plunder in the heroic times of Roman iniquity, never equalled the gigantic corruption of *this single act*! Never did Nero, in all the insolent prodigality of despotism, deal out to his prætorian guards, a donation fit to be named with the largesse showered down, by the bounty of our chancellor of the exchequer (Mr. Pitt) on the faithful band of his Indian Seapoys."

A member in parliament, some years ago, told Sir John Miller, that he no more understood a subject which he had been speaking on, than the animal above mentioned did the duties of *his* office. This elegant simile is to be found in the parliamentary debates. A note of the date has been mislaid, but the quotation is perfectly correct.

herrings.

as long as they please. They are idle or busy, just as they are supplied with salt. When a smuggling salt-boat arrives, they will get perhaps six shillings *per* barrel for their herrings. As that salt is expended, the price falls to five, four, three, two, one shilling *per* barrel, and sometimes to six-pence or eight pence. At other times, you may purchase a barrel of fine fresh herrings for a single quid of tobacco.* A barrel contains from six to sixteen hundred herrings, according to their size.

It seems needless to enlarge much farther on the immense advantages that might be derived from this inexhaustible resource for the industry and subsistence of the Scots nation. If the bounties and taxes were at once abolished, and the Dutch prohibited from interfering in the fishery, the Hebrides and the western coasts of Scotland, would, likely, in the course of thirty or forty years, quadruple their present population. It might with reason be expected, that thousands of the Dutch mariners who are at present employed in that business, would come and settle in the country. Multitudes would likewise flock from different quarters of Britain. Villages of manufacturers would by degrees be established, and the Hebrides would present a prospect of industry, of prosperity, and of happiness, which the most sanguine friend to national improvements can at present hardly conjecture. To make this assertion intelligible, and to show what benefits may be derived from the British fisheries, no writer can be cited with more propriety than John De Witt, Grand Pensioner of Holland. He informs us, on the authority of Sir Walter Raleigh, that in the year 1618, the Hollanders employed, on the coast of Britain, three thousand ships and fifty thousand men; and that for transporting and selling the fish so taken, and bringing home the returns for them, they required nine thousand additional ships, and one hundred and fifty thousand men. Perhaps this estimate was exaggerated, but the real number of men and ships, engaged in British fisheries, must have been very great. De Witt quotes a Dutch

* Illustrations of the report, p. 163.

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writer, who relates, that in the space of three days, in the year 1601, there sailed out of Holland, to the eastward, between eight and nine hundred ships, and fifteen hundred busses for the herring fishery. The Grand Pensioner adds, that from the time of Sir Walter Raleigh, to the year 1667, the Dutch fisheries had been increased one third part. He conjectures that the United Provinces contained two millions and four hundred thousand people, and of these, that four hundred and fifty thousand persons derived their subsistence from the fisheries, and the commerce and manufactures which depended upon them.* These particulars are specified to prove that Dr. Anderson has not, on this subject, made an extravagant supposition. He estimates that one hundred thousand fishermen might find constant employment in the British sea. He thinks, that if this number of fishermen were employed, there would likewise be wanted, twenty or thirty thousand mariners for transporting the cargos to market, and for bringing the necessary return of salt, of coals, of grain, of casks, of the materials for ship-building, and the numberless articles dependent on an extensive fishery.† Supposing that eighty thousand of these mariners were married, and that the husbands had, on an average, four children, the total amount of their families would be four hundred thousand persons. These, added to an hundred and twenty thousand seamen, would make, in whole, an addition of five hundred and twenty thousand British *subjects*.‡ But this is not all. These mariners and their families would not only supply a great part of the nation with an important article of subsistence, and thus lessen the wages of labour, but they would afford, among themselves, a wide market for the commodities of the farmer

* The true Interest and Political Maxims of Holland. part I, chapters 6 and 9, translated by John Campbell, and printed at London, in 1746. Dr. Anderson, in his Evidence before the committee of fisheries, declares, on the authority of De Witt, and others, that in the last century, two hundred and sixty thousand persons were computed to be employed by Holland in the fisheries alone. I mention these different numbers, without knowing how to reconcile them.

† Evidence before the committee, p. 317.

‡ This word, in its original sense, implies something that is *cast down and trodden under foot*. When applied in its common acceptation, the choice of expression is happy.

and

and the manufacturer. They would thus, in a double way, promote the public interest. They would lessen the expence of subsistence, and, at the same time, they would multiply the excitements to industry. The attainment of these two objects, is the very *Alpha* and *Omega* of national prosperity. We should then see land, which gives not at present one shilling *per* acre of rent, produce from three to six pounds sterling.* We should see a barren wast of stones and bogs, with scarce a single blade of grass upon it, converted into luxuriant crops of wheat and clover. Manufacturing villages would rise in the wilderness, that is now only distinguished by monumental vestiges of the Picts or the Druids. The farmers and manufacturers would very likely increase to an equal number with that of the fishermen, and Britain might thus acquire an augmentation of a million and forty thousand inhabitants. The example of Holland shews that this conjecture is not chimerical. As the Hebrides and western coasts of Scotland, contain by far the greatest and most important part of this fishery, they would have a chance of acquiring an addition of seven hundred thousand people. An hundredth part of the millions expended upon an ordinary French war, must have been sufficient to found a colony of fishermen in the Hebrides, worth all our foreign possessions put together. But such a colony would not have answered the purposes of ministerial corruption. They would not have entangled us in a quarrel with the rest of Europe. They would not have supplied our rulers with a plausible pretence for loading the public with extravagant taxes. Mr. Pitt speaks of discharging the national debt, and of promoting the public prosperity. At the same time he accepts a Scots revenue of five thousand pounds, that is raised at an expence of ten thousand. He gives half a guinea per day to bludgeon-men to drive the electors of John Horne Tooke from the hustings at Westminster; and an annuity of five hundred and ninety-five

* This has actually happened in Aberdeenshire. The reader may consult an essay in the Bee, Vol. VII. p. 189.

thousand,

thousand, two hundred pounds sterling, to the immaculate creditors of the Nabob of Arcot.*

Of ministerial vigilance in collecting the salt duties in the Scots Highlands, the following particulars will afford a proper conception. "In these cases, the miscarriage of a letter (and "to places where no regular post goes, this must frequently "happen), the carelessness of an ignorant ship-master, the "mistake of a clerk in office, or other circumstances, equally "trivial, often involve a whole industrious family in ruin. "There are instances of men being brought to Edinburgh, "from many hundred miles distance, to the neglect of their own affairs, merely because of some neglect or omission of "some petty clerk in office; which when rectified, brings "no other relief, excepting a *permission to return home "with no farther load of debt, but the expence of such a journey, and the loss it has occasioned.* But should the case be "otherwise, and should the mistake have been committed by "the poor countrymen, though that mistake originated from "ignorance only, or was occasioned by the loss of a letter, in "going to places where no regular posts are established, he "becomes loaded with additional burdens, which in many "cases, all his future industry and care will never enable him "to discharge."†

Dr. Smith, in his Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations, ad-

* The particulars of this edifying transaction are to be found in the works of Edmund Burke, the bosom friend of the "heaven-born minister." A concise account of it will be given in the Political Progress, Part. II. As to the Westminster election, full information may be had from *Proceedings in an action for debt between the right honourable Charles James Fox, plaintiff, and John Horne Tooke, Esq. defendant*, printed in 1792, of which also a summary is inserted in chap. vii. When the legislature of a country consists of such characters, it is not wonderful that our statute books are crowded with the most atrocious edicts. As one specimen out of hundreds, observe what follows:

In 1770, a law was made, which declares, "That all persons killing game, on "any pretence whatever, above an hour before sun-rise, or after sun-set, shall, "without respect to sex or quality, and without any alternative or redemption, be committed to prison for three months at least; and be publicly whipped at noon day, in "the town where the prison is situated." Thus, after giving government three guineas for leave to kill, upon your own ground, a hare that is dear of sixpence, you are, by this law, subject to be whipped for it, whatever may be your sex or condition. This notable penalty hath since been restricted to a fine of five pounds sterling.

† Illustrations of the report, p. 189.

verts to the Scots herring fishery. He says, that during eleven years, from 1770 to 1781 inclusive, one hundred and fifty-five thousand four hundred and sixty-three pounds eleven shillings sterling of bounties were paid on account of it. This was, in proportion to the whole quantity of herrings caught, a premium of twelve shillings and three pence three farthings *per* barrel; and this kind of barrels are worth, upon an average, about a guinea.* Thus the legislature paid four-sevenths of the market price of a barrel of herrings, as a bounty to the persons who caught them. Two-thirds of the bus-caught herrings are exported; and here, a second bounty is given, of two shillings and eight-pence *per* barrel. The average number of vessels employed for these eleven years was about one hundred and ninety-nine. "THREE THOUSAND BUSES have been known to be employed in one year by *the Dutch* in the (Scots) herring fishery, besides those fitted out by the Ham-burghers, Bremeners, and other northern ports.†" By the estimate of Sir Walter Raleigh, already cited, a Dutch bus carries sixteen hands and two-thirds. If we compute that the vessels engaged in our fishery by foreign nations amount, all together, to four thousand, and that each carries only twelve hands, here are forty-eight thousand foreign sailors reaping the maritime harvest of Scotland. The bounty first promised by parliament for vessels, was fifty shillings *per* ton. Mr. Guthrie says, "that the bounty was withheld *from year to year*, while, "in the mean time, the adventures were not only *sinking their fortunes*, but also borrowing to the utmost limits of their credit."‡ It was then reduced to thirteen shillings. The vessels are fitted out from the north-west parts of England, the north of Ireland, the ports of Clyde, "and the neighbouring Islands."§ As a complete demonstration of Dutch good sense, and of our own superlative stupidity, we need only to observe that the Hollanders send out ten or fifteen times as many buses without any bounty at all, as the British parliament can collect

* Inquiry, Book iv. chap. 3.

† Guthrie's Geographical Grammar. Art. ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

‡ Ibid. Art. SCOTLAND.

§ Ibid.

by a bounty equal to four-sevenths of the value of all the herrings taken; besides the remission of salt duties, and a subsequent bounty on exportation. Mr. Guthrie complains with justice, that "this noble institution, (*viz.* the bounty,) still "labours under many difficulties, from the *caprice* and *ignorance* of the legislature." Thus, an hundred thousand seamen, and perhaps a million of subjects, are lost to Britain.

A committee of the House of Commons, in one of their reports, acknowledge, "that the present duties upon coals are too *high*, and operate more as a prohibition on the use of the "article, *than as a benefit to the revenue.*"* The consequences of the coal-tax are specified in many passages of the statistical account of Scotland. "Perhaps the greatest barrier "against household industry and manufacture among us, is the "*scarcity of fuel* in many parts of the country. A human being, pinched with cold, when confined within doors, is always "an *inactive* being. The day-light during winter, is spent "by many of the women and children in gathering *elding*, as "they call it; that is sticks, furze, or broom, for fuel; and "the evening in warming their shivering limbs before the "scanty fire it produces. Could *our legislators* be conducted "through this parish, (Kirkcubbin, in the county of Wigton,) "in the winter months, could *the lords and commons*, during "the Christmas recess, visit the cottages of the poor through "these parts of the united kingdoms, where nature hath refused "coal, and *their laws* have *more than doubled the price of it*, "this would be Shakespeare's *wholesome physic*, and would, "more than any thing else, quicken their invention to find "ways and means for supplying the place of *the worst of laws.*"†

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Such

* Appendix to Dr. Anderson's account of the Hebrides, p. 330.

† Statistical Account, vol. iv. p. 147.

The work swarms with complaints on this head. This simple pastor appears to know but little of British lords and commons, when he appeals to their sensibility. Take notice to what follows:

"A late ball given by Lord Courtney cost six thousand guineas. He had, among "other rarities, a thousand peaches at a guinea each, a thousand pottles of cherries "at five shillings each, a thousand pottles of strawberries at five shillings each, and "every other article in the same proportion." London Newspapers, 5th May, 1792.—Another newspaper, some time ago, had this article.

"To

by

SCOTLAND.

Such legislators ought to be sent to Bridewell *during the recess*, and to remain there, fed on bread and water, and without fire or candle, to the end of the session. Dr. Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, remarks, that *the great never consider their inferiors as their fellow creatures*. The British landholders illustrate, on all occasions, the veracity of this maxim. In England, this tax on coals, when transported by sea, has been very hurtful. "One would think," says Lord Kaimes, "that it was intended to check population.—One may at the first glance, distinguish the coal counties from the rest of England, by the industry of the inhabitants, and by plenty of manufacturing towns and villages."*

"To such a degree of perfection are dog-kennels now brought, that one lately built by Eir William Rowley, at his seat in Suffolk, covers four acres of ground. Among other accommodations for his hounds, he has erected a warm bath, through which each dog is regularly purified after each day's chase."

Mendoza, the bruiser, some time ago, refused to settle the terms of a boxing-match, until he had consulted his *intimate friend*, the Duke of Hamilton. A letter from him to this effect appeared in the public prints. His Grace, not long after, invited *his friend* to a visit at the palace of Hamilton. One day, after dinner, the Duke introduced to his company the subject of boxing. He extolled the talents of the Jew, and requested leave to bring him in, that the gentlemen present might fee the proficiency of his Grace in *sparring*. Accordingly, the parties stripped, a ring was formed, and the combat began. The Duke did not strike fair, of which he was repeatedly warned by his friend. The man was at last so exasperated by his Grace persisting in foul play, that he gave him a stroke in earnest, which sent the Duke of Hamilton staggering to the other end of the room. His Grace was carried to bed, and the company dispersed. Mendoza was lately in a Dublin tap-room. His name was discovered, and he was directly ordered to quit the house. So different are the citizens of Dublin from this Scots Duke, in *their choice of company*.

The Prince of Wales brought to Newmarket, some time ago, a race-horse of high reputation. Betts were laid in his favour, but when he came upon the turf, he fell far behind. He was matched to run a second time next day, and betts were laid with a very great odds against him. His royal master *accepted the odds*, and betted to a very large amount in favour of his horse. The whole assemblage of black-legs considered the Prince as completely *taken in*. But he very soon convinced them that he was more than a match for the whole gang, at their own weapons. On this second day, his horse resumed his former superiority, and won the race with ease. It was said, that the Duke of Bedford alone lost, by this masterly stroke of jockeyship, twelve thousand pounds sterling. The newspapers estimated the *total balance* in favour of the Prince, from fifty to an hundred thousand pounds. Such was the triumph of

Our eldest hope, divine Iulus,
Late, very late, O may he rule us!

His groom was examined, and, as a swindler, forever exiled from the turf. The salary of fifty thousand pounds a year, paid to this hopeful Prince, commenced about the 1st of January, 1781.

* Sketches of the History of Man. Vol. I. p. 486. Quarto edition.

In

In the year ending on the fifth of January, 1789, the salt duties for Scotland, produced in whole - -

£ 18043 0 11-4
Salaries, incidents, bounties and drawbacks, 8749 9 11 3-4

Net produce of the salt tax - - 9293 10 11-2*

Dr. Anderson has just now published a state of the bounties paid annually by government, upon the Scots fisheries, and of the premiums, upon the exportation of Scots herrings.† They amount, in round numbers, to *twenty-two thousand pounds per annum*. A society in Scotland for encouraging the fishery, give about *two thousand pounds*. The Scots board of customs expend about ten thousand pounds annually for cruizers to prevent smuggling; of which sum, the Doctor states one half, or *five thousand pounds*, to the accompt of salt duties. Thus, the bounties, premiums, and cruizers cost altogether, twenty-nine thousand pounds a year.‡ The net revenue of salt for the whole kingdom is about nine thousand pounds. Thus twenty thousand pounds are sunk. If parliament would only abolish the tax, and order the Dutch and other foreigners to stay at home, an hundred thousand mariners, and a million of subjects might soon be added to the population of Britain.

We have seen the miserable effects of the coal tax. The Scots duties upon salt and coals together produce hardly a net eighteen thousand pounds a year to the exchequer.§ At the same time, the Scots mint, where not even a copper farthing

* History of the public revenue, Part III. chap. 6.

† This premium, as above stated, is two shillings and eight pence *per barrel*. Dr. Anderson has blended under one of these articles, "herrings and *hard fish*" exported from England, two thousand pounds." Hard fish had no business in a statement about herrings; and some deduction from the sum total should be made on account of them.

‡ The Bee, Vol. XI. p. 26.

§ History of the public revenue, Part III. chap. 6,

has been coined for eighty-five years, costs the public annually	- - - - -	£ 1000
The keeper of the great seal	- - - - -	3000
The keeper of the privy seal	- - - - -	3000
The lord justice general	- - - - -	2000
The lord register	- - - - -	1200
The commander in chief of the forces in North-Britain	- - - - -	1460
The vice-admiral	- - - - -	1000
The knight marischal	- - - - -	400
The signet-office is a <i>direct</i> tax upon the public, and it now nets to the keeper, Mr. Dundas	- - - - -	3000
The saine-office, the fees of which are a second direct tax, nets to its keeper about two thousand pounds, besides a salary from government, of two hundred more	- - - - -	2200
		18,260

Every one of these places is an absolute sinecure, the duties of which are not discharged by the persons who receive the money. Some of them have nothing to do, but in every one of them, where business is really transacted, the deputies are paid over and above, and sometimes very extravagantly, at the *additional expence of the public*. The total charge to the nation, for these ten bubbles, extends, as above specified, to eighteen thousand, two hundred and sixty pounds sterling *per annum*. Thus hath one part of us been loaded with the plunder of the rest. Thus are six or eight hundred thousand Scots people kept in a state of comparative beggary, by the payment of salt and coal duties, while six or eight solitary pensioners riot on the robbery of the poor.

“ A *half-starved* Highland woman frequently bears more
 “ than twenty children, while a pampered fine lady is often
 “ incapable of bearing any.—but *poverty*, though it does not
 “ prevent the generation, is extremely unfavourable to the
 “ rearing

"rearing of children. It is not uncommon, I have been frequently told, in the Highlands of Scotland, for a mother who has born twenty children, not to have *two* alive."* The sum of this passage is, that multitudes of the children of Scots Highlanders perish of hunger, and of the numerous distempers that follow in its train. The monopoly of land, the infancy of agriculture, the non-entity of manufactures, with the accursed salt excise, and coal duty, form the fountain-head from whence these waters of bitterness flow.

CHAPTER III.

Reports of the commissioners of public accounts—Crown lands— Astonishing corn law—British famine in the reign of William Third—Striking picture of Scotch wretchedness at that period—What Scotland might have been—War in general—Culloden—The bloody Duke.

THE practice of granting enormous pensions, has been carried infinitely farther in England, than on the north of Tweed. The soil is richer, and the weeds of corruption grow ranker. As the subject is but imperfectly understood, it may be worth while to compare the Brobdingnag peculators of London with the Lilliputians of the same kind in this country. For this end, we may consult a curious and authentic assemblage of evidence published by parliament. During the war with America, they appointed commissioners to examine the state of public accounts. The office was performed with fidelity, and the reports published. In the sixth report, we learn, that the audi-

* Smith's Inquiry, book I. chap. 8.

tor of the exchequer received, in the year 1780, from his place, a clear profit of	-	-	£	14,016	4	1
His first clerk	-	-	-	2,752	3	6
The clerk of the pells	-	-	-	7,597	12	0 1-2
The four tellers of the exchequer	-	-	-	29,267	4	4 1-2
The usher of the exchequer	-	-	-	4,200		
Total to eight persons,				£	57,833	4 0

The commissioners recommend the abolition of this last office. They observe, that "the chief, if not the only present duty of the usher, is to supply the treasury and exchequer with stationary and turnery ware, and a variety of other articles, and the exchequer with coals, and to provide workmen for certain repairs." In 1780, he provided articles and repairs to the amount of fourteen thousand, four hundred and forty pounds, three shillings and six-pence. On the articles, he was entitled to the very moderate commission of forty *per cent*; so that the post must, from the first hour of its existence, have been designed as a job. The net profits were, as above stated, four thousand guineas. The exact sum pocketed by the officers and clerks of exchequer, in 1780, clear of all deductions, was seventy-five thousand, eight hundred and sixty-three pounds, nineteen shillings and three-pence, three farthings, sterling. The report says, that in this year, the *ineffective* officers of the exchequer, received *forty-five thousand, three hundred and thirty-two pounds*. This account is too favourable. We have just seen, that fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three pounds, four shillings, were divided among eight persons. Of these, the only man of business is the first clerk to the auditor, and even he has a salary ten times as large as any merchant would pay to a mere accomptant. The exchequer contains several other clerks with considerable incomes. The four first clerks to the four tellers, received among them, in 1780, five thousand, two hundred and forty-one pounds, and eight-pence three farthings. From this general survey, it may be suspected, that the whole duties of the exchequer might

be

be performed for a tenth part of the wages now paid ; as even, by the present glimmering, we distinctly perceive, that four-fifths of the above seventy-five thousand pounds are absorbed in sinecures. In time of peace, the perquisites would be somewhat less, but the labour would be less in proportion. Fifteen active clerks, at five hundred pounds sterling each, could find, at their own charges, the requisite assistants, and actually perform the business. This simple alteration would, in 1780, have saved to the public, sixty-eight thousand, three hundred pounds. The largeness of *nominal* salaries, forms but the sag-end of the story. After stating various abuses, the report goes on in these words :

“ There still remain to be *made up*, the accounts of *four*
 “ treasurers of the navy, to the amount of *fifty-eight millions*
 “ *nine hundred and forty-four thousand, five hundred and*
 “ *eighty-eight pounds*, and of three paymasters general of the
 “ forces, amounting to four millions, six hundred and sixty
 “ six thousand, eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, exclu-
 “ five of the treasurer and paymaster-general in office ; to the
 “ first of whom has been issued, to the 30th of September,
 “ 1780, *sixteen millions, seven hundred and eighty-one thou-*
 “ *sand, two hundred and seventeen pounds*, and to the latter,
 “ to the end of the same year, *forty three millions, two hun-*
 “ *dred and fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and eleven*
 “ *pounds*, and not one year's account of either is *completed*.
 “ So that, of the money issued to the navy, *seventy-five mil-*
 “ *lions, seven hundred and twenty-five thousand, eight hun-*
 “ *dred and five pounds*, and of the money issued to the army,
 “ *forty-seven millions, nine hundred and twenty thousand,*
 “ *seven hundred and eighty-six pounds* ; together, *one hundred*
 “ *and twenty-three millions, six hundred and forty-six thou-*
 “ *sand, five hundred and ninety-one pounds*, (not including
 “ *ten millions, six hundred and forty-seven thousand, one hun-*
 “ *dred and eighty-eight pounds*, issued to the navy, and *eight*
 “ *millions, one hundred and twenty-one thousand pounds*, to
 “ the army, to the end of the last year,) is as yet UN-

ACCOUNTED

"ACCOUNTED FOR." These various sums unaccounted for, amount, in the whole, to *one hundred and forty-two millions, four hundred and fourteen thousand, seven hundred and seventy nine pounds*. This report is dated the 11th of February, 1782: Lord Holland, paymaster-general of the forces, resigned his office in 1765. He had received near *forty-six millions sterling*. His final account was delivered into the auditor's office, seven years after his resignation. Compare this with the prosecution instantly raised against a Scots fisherman, for the penalty of a salt bond. The balance actually in the hand of his lordship, when he lost his place, was *four hundred and sixty thousand pounds*. The fourth report says, that upon the 30th of September, 1780, *two hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds* were still due to the public by his representatives, and on a computation of simple interest, at four *per cent. per annum*, that the loss to the nation by the money left in his hands, was, then, *two hundred and forty-eight thousand, three hundred and ninety-four pounds, thirteen shillings sterling*; as the public have no claim for the interest of money lodged with a paymaster, even after he is dismissed*. Thus far the commissioners of public accounts. Now think of the prosecution of a shipwrecked mariner for the duty of six bushels of bonded salt †. It was commonly said that Mr. Richard Rigby, a late paymaster of the forces, cleared annually, seventy thousand pounds from his office, chiefly by keeping in his hands immense sums of public money. What signify the minnows of Tyburn, contrasted with the leviathans of the exchequer, sporting in an ocean of seventeen millions sterling a year? On the waste of public money, Edmund Burke speaks as follows: "It is impossible for a man to be an œconomist, under whom various officers, in their several departments, may spend even just what they please, and often with an emulation of expense, as contributing to the importance, if not profit, of

* This account is inserted in successive volumes of the New Annual Register. A better analysis of some of their contracts will appear in the Second Part of this Work.

† Supra Chap. 1.

" their several departments. Thus much is certain, that
 " neither the present, nor any other first lord of the treasury,
 " has been ever able to take a survey, or to make even a toler-
 " able GUESS of the expences of government for any one
 " year; so as to enable him, with the least degree of certainty,
 " or even probability, to bring his affairs within compass."*
 And again, " A system of confusion remains, which is not
 " only alien but *adverse* to all œconomy; a system, which is
 " not only prodigal in its *very essence*, but causes every thing
 " else which belongs to it, to be prodigally conducted."†

" In all the great monarchies of Europe, there are still many
 " large tracts of land which belong to the crown. They are
 " generally forest; and sometimes forest, where, after travel-
 " ling several miles, you will scarce find a *single tree*, a
 " mere waste and loss of country in respect both of produce and
 " population. In every great monarchy of Europe, the sale of
 " the crownlands would produce a *very large sum of money*.—
 " The crown lands of Great Britain do not, at present, afford
 " *the fourth part* of the rent which could probably be drawn
 " from them, if they were the property of private persons."‡
 This would be a better way to raise money, than by taxing
 shopkeepers, pedlars, and servant maids. It has been com-
 puted that the crown lands of Britain could be raised in their
 value, by setting them on proper leases, or by selling them off
 entirely, to a rent of four hundred thousand pounds a year, more
 than their present value; but it would be hazardous to warrant
 this vague estimation.

When so great a part of the revenues and resources of a na-
 tion are thus miserably cast away, there must be somewhere in
 the same political body, a large proportion of distress. Accord-
 ingly, Dr. Davenant computes, that twelve hundred thousand
 people in England *receive alms*.§ Dr. Goldsmith, in his His-
 tory of Animated Nature, gives a calculation, that in London,

* Speech on œconomical reform.

† Ibid.

‡ Inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations. Book V.
 chap. 2. Part I.

§ Sketches of the History of Man. Vol. I. p. 473.

two thousand persons die every year of *hunger*. Dr. Johnson says, that in 1759, the jails of England contained twenty thousand prisoners for debt.* He conjectures, that five thousand of these debtors perished annually in prison. Dr. Wendeborn states as a wonted computation, that London contains forty thousand common prostitutes. It shelters some thousands of highwaymen, pick-pockets and swindlers of all kinds, who gain a regular subsistence by the exercise of their talents. These are the natural consequence of crown lands lying waste, and of an hundred and forty-two millions sterling, unaccounted for. In such a condition, we give an hundred and eighty thousand pounds sterling, at a single dash, to pay the debts of a thoughtless young man. In Holland and Switzerland, beggars, and prisoners for debt, are much less numerous than in England, because the Dutch and the Swiss are more wise, more happy, and, to all rational purposes, more *free*, than the British nation. "There was not, when Mr. Howard visited Holland, "more than one prisoner for debt in the great city of Rotterdam."† If half the panegyrics pronounced by Britons upon themselves are true, genius and virtue can very seldom be found beyond the limits of this blessed island. As to civil liberty, an English writer, on that subject, begins by supposing, that it is confined exclusively to the British dominions.

From these miscellaneous remarks, we proceed to the corn law, lately passed. No part of our political system has been an object of more clamorous applause than the bounty granted by parliament on the exportation of British grain. It is said that this bounty was an encouragement essentially requisite for the interest of the farmers, because, without it, they would not venture to raise a sufficient quantity of corn for home consumption. By giving a bounty on exporting it, the farmers were always certain of a market; and it was supposed, that, but for the prospect of this resource, they would very often for-

* See No. 28. The author adds, in a note, that since first writing, he had found some question the calculation.

† Burke's Speech to Britons, on the 6th of September, 1780.

bear to raise it. The profound policy of this expedient has been extolled by Lord Kaimes, by Sir John Dalrymple, and by a crowd of other writers, whose very names would fill a sheet of paper. Others consider the bounty on exporting corn as one of the most formidable engines of oppression, that the *landed interest* has ever discharged on the rights of mankind. The more that the principles of British policy are examined, the more shall we, like Rochester, be convinced, that,

"Dutch prowess, Danish wit, and *British policy*,

"Great NOTHING! mainly tend to thee."

The empires of Japan and China are much better cultivated than the British Islands. They know nothing of any such bounty. Ancient Egypt, and likewise Hindostan, before the East-India company had destroyed thirty-six millions of its inhabitants, were examples of the same kind. In these countries and others that might be named, agriculture has advanced to high perfection; while, at the same time, the farmers of England must be bribed to the plough. There appears an absurdity on the very face of this supposition; for it is as reasonable to say, that the people of Britain cannot, like the Japanese, walk without crutches, as that their farmers will not, like those of Japan, raise as much corn as they can, unless they are hired to *it* by the state. Dr. Smith, in his *Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations*, hath combated this corn bounty. Postlethwaite also, in his dictionary, has a passage to the same purpose; and as the bulk of his book may have prevented some people from reading it quite through, we shall extract a few remarks on the corn laws.

"There is no complaint more common among our merchants than that foreigners underwork us in almost every kind of manufacture; and can we be surprised at it? when the general tendency of our laws, is to make labour dear *at home*, and cheap *abroad*; when we either forbid our people to work, or oblige them to work in the most disadvantageous manner; when we lay all our taxes on trade, or, which is

still

“ still worse for trade, on the *necessaries of life*; and when we
 “ contrive to feed the labourers, manufacturers, and seamen of
 “ foreign countries, with our corn at a cheaper rate *than our*
 “ *own people can have it!* To raise the price of corn at home
 “ in whatever manner it is done, is the same thing as to lay a
 “ tax on the consumption of it; and to do that in such a man-
 “ ner as lessens the price of it abroad, is to apply this tax to
 “ the benefit of foreigners.”* The bounty paid by law on the
 exportation of corn, hath, by one account, amounted, in a sin-
 gle year, to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.† By ano-
 ther account, “ the bounty upon corn alone has sometimes cost
 “ the public in one year, more than *three hundred thousand*
 “ *pounds.*”‡

Weekly accounts of the average prices of corn, in different
 parts of Britain, are published by authority of parliament. Be-
 fore we examine the law so lately past on this head, it is pro-
 per to look into these weekly reports. We shall thus learn
 upon what sort of information the legislature went, and how
 far they were qualified, by a previous acquaintance with the
 state of the corn trade, to make laws concerning it.

For the county of Northumberland, there were two returns
 of average prices of oat-meal, during the week which ended on
 the 28th of April, 1792. A boll weighs an hundred and forty
 pounds avoirdupois. At Hexham, in Northumberland, the
 price of a boll was said to be twenty eight shillings and eight
 pence. At Berwick upon Tweed, in the same county, and at
 the distance of no more than sixty miles, the average price, at
 the same time, was only *eleven shillings and nine-pence*. If
 these accounts of prices were accurate, it would have been an
 excellent trade to transport corn from Berwick to Hexham,
 where it would give more than double the same price. An
 hundred pounds employed in this way, must have returned a
 clear profit of an hundred and forty-four and two-sevenths *per*
cent. subtracting only the expence of carriage. The medium

* Dictionary, Vol. I. p. 869.

† Sketches of the History of Man, Vol. I. p. 492.

‡ Smith's Inquiry, book iv. chap. 5.

is struck between these two rates, and twenty shillings and two pence *per* boll, is returned as the average price of oat-meal, for the county of Northumberland. No body will believe or pretend to believe, that both these reports are genuine. It is very likely that both are untrue. There is a constant intercourse between Hexham and Berwick, and the several prices, in every part of the country, are invariably and universally known. To fancy then such a difference in the rate of corn, is like believing that the water collected behind a dam will keep at its former height, when the dam itself hath been removed. The physical absurdity of the one supposition, is not greater than the moral absurdity of the other. In the same week, a boll of oat-meal, at Berwick, in this very county of Northumberland is stated, by the weekly report, at three pounds, two shillings and six-pence. Thus, by carrying oat-meal from the one Berwick to the other, a profit might have been gained of more than four hundred *per cent*. The following are the prices in the reports of the same week, for some other places. For Westmorland, fourteen shillings and seven-pence; for Herefordshire, fifty-five shillings and two-pence; in Lancaster, fourteen shilling and eleven pence; in Salop, fifty shillings and eleven-pence; in Chester fifteen shillings and a penny; in Bedfordshire, fifty shillings and seven-pence. These reports published by the persons acting under parliament, are of equal authenticity with Robinson Crusoe. Yet, as we shall immediately perceive, the subsistence of millions of people may depend on the accuracy of these identical weekly reports.*

The new corn law commenced its operations on the 15th of November, 1791. In every stage it had received an obstinate opposition. On one clause, a committee of the house of commons were equally divided, sixty-two on each side, and the vote of the chairman decided against it. The act, as now published, fills eighty-four folio pages* of confusion and repeti-

* These particulars of the weekly reports were first published by Dr. Anderson, in the *Bea*, Vol. IX. p. 30.

+ The remark on the *Thurs* above quoted, was perfectly just. Many an act of parliament would, as a composition, *deserve* *several* *days*.

tion. By the assistance of some gentlemen, I have been enabled to form an analysis of a part of its contents.

The maritime country of England and Wales, is by this law, divided into twelve districts; and all Scotland into four. To simplify the discussion as much as possible, let us confine ourselves at present, to the first of the four districts of Scotland. It comprehends the counties of Fife, Kinross, Clackmannan, Stirling, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Peebles. Supposing that a scarcity of provisions should prevail in the shire of Edinburgh, wheat, for instance cannot be imported into it from any other district of Britain, till the average prices of wheat have been ascertained over the eleven counties with which it forms a district. It must be proved, to the satisfaction of the sheriff depute of the county, that the average price of wheat is fifty shillings per quarter; for if it is imported, when the price is lower than that sum, there is a duty on the importation, of twenty-four shillings and threepence, which is equivalent to the prohibition. But though the public should really be starving, and wheat extravagantly dear, the real price of it can *only* be ascertained to the sheriff depute, by these weekly returns above stated. This is the express injunction of the statute, and these identical returns are of as much actual authority as the croaking of a parrot.

Now it must be observed, that in this first Scottish district, fertile and barren counties are injudiciously classed together. Of the eleven above-mentioned, only Fife, Edinburgh and Haddington produce in general good grain. That of the other eight counties is often at the rate of ten or twelve shillings *per* boll, when the grain of Fife, or Edinburgh, sells at eighteen shillings. Put the case then, that the wheat of Edinburgh has risen to fifty shillings, and an importation is wanted from a foreign country. "No," says the sheriff depute of the county. "The grand broker of Westminster elections, viz. *the heaven-born minister*, the jockey peers of Newmarket, with proxies in their pockets, and the *pocket-list* representatives of St. Mawes and Old Sarum, have ordered things better. They

" have

" have debated and scolded among themselves, upon this sub-
 " ject, for three months. By two majorities of ten or fifteen
 " votes out of *eight hundred*, they have produced a *permanent*
 " corn act, an act of which they boast, as the master-piece of
 " legislation. *Seven entire statutes* have been repealed to
 " make room for it. This laconic law has three or four hun-
 " dred clauses, which Oedipus could not have explained, and
 " Simonides could not have remembered. By one of these ar-
 " ticles, you are not to import wheat, though you may be
 " starving for want of it, till the wheat of Peebles and Clack-
 " mannan, has mounted from its present rate of thirty shillings
 " *per quarter*, up to forty. By that time, your own must
 " have risen to *sixty*. We shall then strike the medium, and
 " suffer you to import it for a duty of half a crown *per quarter*.
 " You need not grumble. The people of Orkney and Shet-
 " land are infinitely worse off. Among them, an ear of corn
 " is an object of astonishment; and it is as much inferior in
 " quality to that of Peebles, as the latter is inferior to yours.
 " You are permitted to import oats when yours rise to seven-
 " teen shillings *per quarter*, for a duty of only one shilling,
 " which goes to make up the half guinea *per day* to West-
 " minster bludgeon-men, and the four thousand guineas *per*
 " annum to the usher of the exchequer. But when the oats of
 " Orkney, are *nominally* at seventeen shillings, they are in rea-
 " lity dearer than yours, when at twenty-five or thirty shillings.
 " In a word, you are graciously permitted to eat bread, perhaps a
 " third part cheaper, than those beggarly islanders. Mark the
 " superior felicity of your situation; and let your hearts glow
 " with gratitude to the best of princes." The admiring citi-
 " zens hear their magistrate with silent rapture, and bless their
 " stars that they were born under the British constitution. N. B.
 " His Lordship, notwithstanding his constitutional good nature,
 " had just then endured five or six of them to be shot, in honour
 " of his majesty's birth-day.*—The fallacy of the corn returns

* In Charles-street, George's-square. They had been burning an effigy of straw.

has already been mentioned, and we perceive what infinite mischief they may possibly commit. The wheat in the county of Edinburgh may be returned at twenty-five shillings per quarter, when the real price is fifty or sixty, and thus importation may be prevented.

There is another circumstance in this law that deserves attention. The wheat, oats, and barley of England are, in quality, far superior to ours. This is well known to every baker and brewer. At this moment, Edinburgh brewers are buying English barley at eight shillings *per* boll higher than is given for barley of Scots produce, taking the prices of the different counties at a medium. The former is of superior value, by the proportion of fifteen or eighteen to ten.

In Kent, Norfolk, and the other counties of England, subject to this law, the wheat is twenty-five *per cent.* better than that of Scotland. To make the statute equitable, therefore, the people of North-Britain ought to have imported wheat, when it was at forty shillings per quarter, while England should not have been allowed an importation, till English wheat had risen to *fifty* shillings. "This is what a wise and virtuous ministry would have done and said. This, therefore, is what our ministers could never think of saying or doing."* English grain, of all kinds, ought to have been rated, for the licence of importation, at twenty or twenty-five *per cent.* higher than Scots

The plain meaning of the law is, that the people of England must eat their bread dearer by twenty-five *per cent.* than Englishmen eat theirs. That is the true intent and meaning of this corn law. Every dealer in grain will tell you, on a minute's warning, that he does not understand this statute; and that he never heard of any body, who could safely undertake to decypher these eighty-four folio pages, about the terms upon which we are to be permitted to *buy our bread*. When the corn merchants of Leith found part of the law totally beyond their comprehension, they applied to the custom-house

* Burke's speech on the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot.

officers,

officers, who frankly declared that they were not able to explain it. In this way a *heaven-born* minister manages the business of a *free* nation.

If a Swiss, or a North-American, were to read this account, he would certainly conclude that Britain is inhabited only by two kinds of people, slaves and mad-men. Dr. Anderson gives a just idea of this statute of desolation. "By the late corn-act, it is in the power of any custom-house officer stationed there (in the Highlands or Hebrides), to starve nearly half a million of people for want of food, almost *when he pleases*."* It would require an uncommon degree of penetration, to determine whether the authors of this act are fittest for Bedlam or the Old Bailey. If the most inveterate enemies to human happiness had consulted for ages together, they could not have devised a more decisive method, than by this bill, for reducing the labouring part of the Scots nation to the last extremity of poverty and wretchedness.

With regard to the probable consequences of this corn-law, hereafter, we may judge of the future by the past. "During some years previous to the peace of Ryswick (which was concluded in 1697), the price of corn in England was *double*, and in Scotland *quadruple* its ordinary rate; and in one of these years, it was believed, that in Scotland *eighty thousand people died of want*."† A tenth part of the expence of one of the British campaigns in Flanders would have averted from this island so dreadful a calamity. In Aberdeenshire, the consequences of this famine may still be traced. Whole families expired together, and the boundaries of deserted farms were forgotten. To ascertain them is, at this day, sometimes an object of dispute. The land bears the marks of the plough; but, having been so long neglected, has relapsed into its original state of barrenness, and is now covered with heath, among which may be discovered the remains of the dwelling-houses of the exterminated inhabitants. These extraordinary

* Bea, Vol. XI. p. 34.

† Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, part III. book 5.



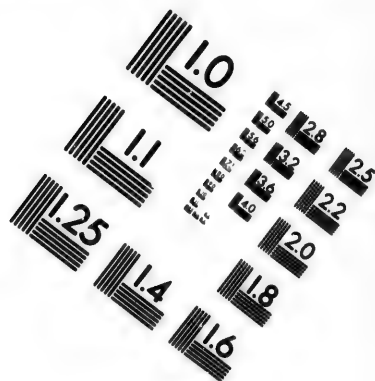
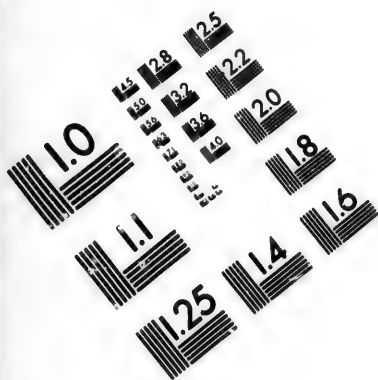
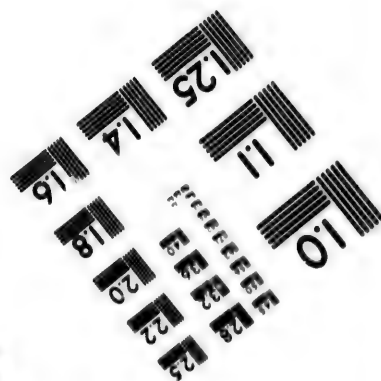
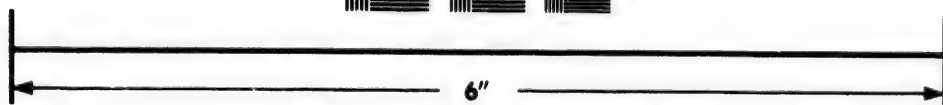
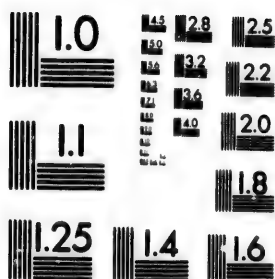


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circumstances have not been observed by any former writer. They were related to me by Dr. Anderson, who has an estate in the county of Aberdeen. We may be persuaded, that in the other years of this famine, at least twenty thousand additional persons perished of hunger; so that this reckoning of extirpation amounts altogether to one hundred thousand lives.

The blessings that poured upon this country in consequence of the Dutch revolution, afford incessant exultation in the pages of our historians. The war of 1689, "which grew out of the *revolution*,"* may be termed the first instalment of the price of that event. The remedy was like breaking a jaw-bone to remove the tooth-ach. Some authors mention this war with as much tranquillity, as if it had begun and ended by the shooting of a crow. Notice how George Chalmers, Esq. walks on velvet over this subject. "The insult offered to the sovereignty of England, by *giving an asylum* to an abdicated monarch, and by disputing the right of a high-minded nation to *regulate its own affairs*, forced king William into an eight-years war with France. Pressed thus by *necessity*, he could not weigh in every scrupulous scales the wealth of his subjects, against the superior opulence of his too potent rival. Yet animated by his characteristic magnanimity, *so worthy of imitation*, and supported by the zeal of a people, whose resources were not then equal to their ardour and bravery, he engaged in an arduous dispute, for the most honourable end; the vindication of the *independence* of a great kingdom."†

On the common principles of hospitality, the king of France could not have been justified in refusing a refuge to the exiled king of England. Mr. Chalmers will not say that Lewis should have delivered up James to William, who was very far from desiring so dangerous a captive. But it was wrong, perhaps, to afford him an asylum; James must have retired somewhere, and, on the same principles, the English nation might have successively declared war against Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Turkey, and every other government in the world, where he

* Estimate, &c. by Mr. Chalmers, p. 107.

† Ibid, p. 1.

might

might be permitted to reside. It would have been much better for the people of England to behead James at once, than thus meanly to hunt him around Europe. Britain was, not at that time, in a situation to support a war of eight years against France. The preceding account of the famine, proves that she was not; and that the conduct of William, in commencing this quarrel, was most *unworthy of imitation*. As Mr. Chalmers hath spoke of a *high-minded nation*, and the necessity of vindicating its *independence*, which, by the way, the king of France never attempted to dispute, we may peruse the following account of the condition to which Scotland had been reduced at the termination of this contest.

"The first thing which I humbly and earnestly propose to that honourable court, (of parliament) is, that they would take into their consideration, the condition of so many thousands of our people, who are, at this day, *dying for want of bread*. And to persuade them, seriously to apply themselves to so indispensable a duty, they have all the inducements which those most powerful emotions of the soul, terror and compassion, can produce. Because from unwholesome food diseases are so multiplied among the poor people, that if some course be not taken, this famine may very probably be followed by a plague; and then, what man is there, even of those who sit in parliament, that can be sure he shall escape? And what man is there in this nation, if he have any compassion, who must not grudge himself every nice bit, and every delicate morsel he puts in his mouth, when he considers that so many are already *dead*, and so many at that minute *struggling with death*, not for want of bread, but of *grains*, which I am credibly informed, have been eaten by by some families, even during the preceding years of scarcity." In another part of this essay, the writer informs us, that, "there are, at this day, in Scotland, (besides a great many poor families, very meanly provided for by the church boxes, with others, who, by living upon bad food, fall into various diseases,) *two hundred thousand people* begging from

“door to door.” * In a preceding discourse, the writer says, that there had been “a three-years scarcity;” so that in the whole, this great calamity must have continued for at least four years, and, perhaps, for a longer time. In 1695, just as the famine was about its commencement, Mr. Paterfon proposed to the people of Scotland, his scheme for founding a colony on the isthmus of Darien. “Almost in an instant, four hundred thousand pounds were subscribed in Scotland, although it be now known, that there was not, at that time, above eight hundred thousand pounds of cash in the kingdom.” † Various obstacles prevented the first colony from sailing from Leith to the West-Indies, till the 26th of July, 1698. The Scots squandered about five hundred thousand pounds sterling on this scheme, while thousands of their countrymen were dying at home of hunger, and while two hundred thousand others were begging from door to door. This was like a person without a shirt to his back, pretending to bid for a coach and six. A swarm of authors agree in lamenting the destruction of the Scots colony. They should likewise have lamented the folly of our grandfathers in attempting to found it. Mr. Chalmers may admire, as much as he pleases, the *magnanimity* of William, and a *high-minded* nation. Scotland, with two hundred thousand beggars shivering in her bosom, had very little temptation to interfere in Dutch or English quarrels. Indeed, this notion of forcing all your neighbours to admit your title to a crown, is a refinement of modern policy. Cassius gave himself no concern whether Boduognatus, or Vercingetorix, acknowledged his claim to the throne of the Trinobantes.

Much noise has been made about the massacre of Glenco, and the tragedy of Darien. This famine was a disaster infinitely more terrible than these, yet it has been recorded with far less clamorous lamentation. By the greater part of the historians of that period, no notice whatever has been bestowed

* Second Discourse on the Affairs of Scotland, by Mr. Fletcher of Saltoun, written in 1698.

† Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 6.

upon it. Yet, if William the third, his ministers, and his parliaments, had been penetrable to human feelings, they would have put an end to the war, for the sake of putting an end to the famine. They might have done so on the most honourable terms. Had William accepted the offers of Louis, "the war of the first grand alliance would have ended *four years sooner than it did*, and the war of the second grand alliance might have been prevented."* If any circumstance can add to the folly and the guilt of William, it is this. He was almost constantly beaten by Louis in the field; and by the peace itself, none of the parties gained one penny of money, or almost one foot of territory. Yet Sir John Dalrymple, that candid and intelligent historian, has composed a panegyric on the wisdom and virtues of this monarch. A thousand other British writers have performed the same task; and the voice of the public hath constantly swelled the general chorus of admiration. This is a kind of infatuation and stupidity, that seems peculiar to the British nation. The French never celebrate the memory of Louis the eleventh, nor did the Roman historians affect to regret the suffocation of Tiberius Cæsar.

It is remarkable, that though the Scots are perpetually talking of their constitution, and their liberties, the whole fabric is entirely founded on one of the grossest and most indecent acts of usurpation ever known. I refer to the celebrated *Union*. The whole negotiation bears, on its very face, the stamp of iniquity. The utmost care was employed to conceal its infant progress from the Scottish nation, and the bargain was at last patched up with precipitation by the Scottish parliament. A sketch of undisputed facts will explain this assertion. The commissioners for framing the articles were nominated by the queen. Thus two nations resigned a most important function to this harmless but insignificant woman, who, though destined to a throne, was scarcely fit for any thing else. On the 22d of July, 1706, the articles of union were signed at London, between the commissioners of the two kingdoms. A respect

* Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part III. book 10.

for the country required them to be printed, and distributed, that the people at large, who were to support the consequences of this bargain, might, before its ratification, have time to consider of it. A *sealed* copy of the treaty of union was delivered to the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, and its contents were kept secret, untill the 3d of October following, when the Scots parliament assembled at Edinburgh. The articles were then laid before them; and violent debates ensued. If the nation had been capable of acting with unanimity, and firmness, proportioned to their feelings, they would immediately have summoned a convention, elected by the people. They would have declared, that the parliament, by granting leave to the queen, to name commissioners for Scotland had betrayed the interest of their country; and as a transaction founded on fraud is in itself unlawful and void, they would, if they chose to negotiate at all, have begun by throwing aside these articles. Instead of this regular and decisive opposition, the country was filled with tumults, and on the brink of insurrection. At Dumfries, a body of armed men burned the articles publicly at the market cross. The Duke of Athol, at the head of his clan, undertook to secure the pass of Stirling, so as to open the communication between the western and northern highlands. At Edinburgh, the parliament, while deliberating on the treaty, found it requisite to surround themselves with an armed force. This assembly was rent into three different parties; and the agents of the crown began, at length, to despair of obtaining a majority. "The sum of *twenty thousand pounds*, which the "queen privately *lent* to the Scotchish treasury,"* contributed to purchase a superiority of votes. Thus the matter went through, and the independence of the Scots nation was bought and sold, with and for its own money. The union was agreed to, "partly," says Mr. Guthrie, "from conviction, and partly "through the force of money, distributed among *the needy nobility*."† When the subject was introduced into the

* Smollet's History of Queen Anne.

† Geographical Grammar, Article SCOTLAND.

English house of commons, Sir John Packington observed, that this was an union carried on by corruption and bribery within doors, and by force and violence without; that the promoters of it had *basely betrayed their trust*, in giving up their independent constitution; and he left it to the judgment of the house to consider, whether or not men of such principles were fit to be admitted into an English house of commons. It is plain, that the treaty was, in itself, altogether illegal. It exactly resembles the sale of an estate, without the consent or knowledge of its owner. The Scotch members of parliament had been authoris'd, by their constituents, to assemble for the common business of the nation; instead of which, they clandestinely transferred its independence to the best bidder. Edmund Burke; in the speech lately quoted, has a passage that exactly defines it. "A corrupt, private interest," says he, "is set up, in direct opposition to the necessities of the nation. A diversion is made of millions of the public money from the public treasury to a private purse." If the parliament of Scotland had a right of transferring its independence to England, we must admit, that the British parliament is equally warrant'd to form an union with the national assembly of France, in spite of the remonstrances of the people of Britain, and without letting them know the terms of the bargain; and then the two countries may be represented at Paris by forty-five deputies, or, indeed, by one only; for the doctrine of the Scotch salesman amounts to that. If they were warrant'd in reducing the representatives of the people to forty-five, they had the same right of reducing them to any lesser number, or, indeed, to cast them aside entirely. If the parliament of Scotland was entitl'd to annihilate itself, it had, by the same rule, a power of abolishing every other part of the government. It could have declared monarchy useless, or, like the commons of Denmark, it could at once have resign'd the liberties of Scotland to the crown. On the same doctrine, an American congress would be justify'd for *uniting* that continent with Britain; and we may conceive what their fellow-citizens would think and

and act on the discovery of such a conjunction. A detail of the obliquities of this union would extend the present chapter beyond its proper limits. A full account of it will be given in the course of this work, when a regular historical narrative commences, beginning with the year 1688, and ending at the present splendid æra. Without regard to persons, to parties, or to public opinions, I shall there, as every where else, hold up truth to the world, as she rises on my researches, in the naked simplicity of her charms.

After such a review, curiosity may lead us to enquire, if the Scots government had been honestly conducted, for the last hundred years, what, by this time, *Scotland itself might have been?* In order to take a proper view of this subject, we must begin by recollecting, that of one hundred years next after the revolution, Britain spent forty-two in actual war with other nations of Europe, over and above the campaigns in America, and the quarrels of the East India Company. The following table exhibits, with tolerable accuracy, the detail of these forty-two years.

Peace.		War.
4 years 8 months	1689. May.	8 years 4 months.
6 ditto 4 ditto	1697. Sept.	10 ditto 3 ditto
5 ditto 8 ditto	1702. May.	2 ditto 6 ditto
12 ditto 4 ditto	1712. August.	0 ditto 2 ditto
7 ditto 0 ditto	1718. Dec.	8 ditto 7 ditto
15 ditto 7 ditto	1721. June.	7 ditto 5 ditto
6 ditto 2 ditto	1727. March.	4 ditto 9 ditto
	1727. May.	
	1739. Oct.	
	1748. May.	
	1755. June.	
	1762. Nov.	
	1778. June.	
	1783. March.	
	1789. May.	
57 years 9 months.		42 years.

Frequent armaments have besides taken place, which, though they did not end in bloodshed, were still very expensive to the public

public, and very distressing to commerce. Britain has been either fighting, or preparing herself to fight, for sixty-five or seventy years out of one hundred. The minds of the people have been kept in a state of incessant fermentation. Their property has been the perpetual sport of ruinous taxes. We never have enjoyed peace for so long a time together, as was requisite for learning its full advantages. Britain resembles a common bulley, who spends five or six days of the week on a boxing-stage, and the rest of it in an excise court, or a correction house. In spite of all this folly, the wealth of the country has been continually increasing. "From the restoration to the revolution, the foreign trade of England had *doubled* in its amount; from the peace of Ryswick to the demise of king William, it had nearly risen *in the same proportion*. "During the first thirty years of the current century, it had *again doubled*" (although three wars, fifteen campaigns, by land or sea, a Scottish rebellion, and six naval armaments for the Baltic, had intervened). "From the year 1750 to 1774, notwithstanding the interruption of *an eight years intervening war*" (viz. from 1756 to 1763), "it appears to have gained more than *one-fourth*, whether we determine from the table of tonnage, or the value of exports."* We can hardly conceive how very greatly British commerce must have augmented by this time, if it had not been retarded by these absurd quarrels. As to the taxes, it has been already observed,† that every sum of money raised from the public, costs them *ten per cent*. "Never was so much false arithmetic employed on any one subject, as that which has been employed to persuade nations that it is their interest *to go to war*. "Were the money, which it has cost, to gain, at the close of a long war, a little town, or a little territory, the right to cut wood here, or to catch fish there, expended in improving what they already possess, in making roads, opening rivers, building ports, improving the arts, and finding employment

* An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Britain, by George Chalmers, Esq. p. 46.

† Vide Introduction.

" for

“ for the poor, it would render them much stronger, much wealthier, and happier. This, I hope, will be our wisdom.” * The greater part of the money spent in war, is employed in the purchase of provisions and military stores, which are consumed in the course of the quarrel, and large sums are always transmitted in hard cash out of this island. Thus a capital is transferred from the most useful and beneficent, to the most savage purposes. Instead of building farm-houses, draining marishes, and inclosing corn-fields, instead of feeding the hungry, and cloathing the naked; instead of employing the idle, and animating the busy, of supporting the industry, and embellishing the elegance of life, it is destined to bribe the brutality of a press-gang, or to pamper the rapacity of a contractor, to hasten the discharge of bombs, the explosion of mines, and the storming of batteries loaded with grape-shot. Transferences of this kind are infinitely numerous, and the conclusion seems evident. War is a two-edged sword, plunged through the heart of society, and cutting both ways, equally to be avoided for the misery which it produces, and the happiness which it prevents. For example, Mr. Burke, some years ago, asserted in parliament, that six hundred thousand pounds per annum were charged for the support of the garrison of Gibraltar, and eighty thousand pounds for oats, furnished to the single legion of Colonel Tarlton. Twelve hundred thousand pounds were charged for the annual provisions only, of forty thousand men, and fifty-seven thousand pounds for presents to the Indians, for which they had only massacred twenty-five women and children.

In seven years, from September 1774, to September, 1780, inclusive, the number of men raised for the British army

was	- - - - -	76,885
Ditto for the navy,	- - - - -	176,008
Total,		<u>252,893†</u>

* Notes on the State of Virginia, by Mr. Jefferson. Article *Public Revenue and Expenses*.

† New Annual Register for 1781. *Principal Occurrences*, p. 40.

The American war lasted for more than two years after this estimate was made, so that the whole number of men raised, must have been at least three hundred thousand. Dr. Franklin, in a letter to Mr. Vaughan, says, that seven hundred British privateers, whose crews he calls *gangs of robbers*, were commissioned during this war. At an allowance of seventy-two men to each of them, the whole amount was fifty thousand four hundred. A workman can, upon an average, earn about ten shillings a week, which, in London, is at present half the common wages of a journeyman taylor. Reduce this to twenty-five pounds *per annum*, and his life may be estimated at twelve years purchase, or three hundred pounds in value to the public. At this rate, the daily labour of the above three hundred and fifty thousand men, extends to eight millions, seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds *per annum*. If they had all perished in the war, the value of their lives would have amounted, at three hundred pounds *per head*, to one hundred and five millions sterling. We are farther to observe, that previous to September, 1774, a very numerous body of men were engaged in the British army and navy, and those persons are not included in the preceding three hundred and fifty thousand. When a corps is raised, and sent out of the British islands to actual service, it seldom happens that more than a sixth, a tenth, or a twentieth, part of the men, ever come home again; and even of those who do so, one half are frequently invalids and pensioners, or beggars. Dr. Johnson, in his Tour through Scotland, relates, that in the war of 1756, an Highland regiment, consisting of twelve hundred men, was sent to North-America, and that of these only *seventy-six* returned. Dr. Franklin, in a short essay on war, observes that privateer men "are rarely fit for any "sober business after a peace, and serve only to increase the "number of highwaymen and housebreakers." From these particulars, we may infer, that at least three hundred thousand persons were lost to the British nation, whose lives in fee-simple, were worth ninety million sterling. Of this account, a fifth part may safely be stated as the share of Scotland; so that the

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Public Revenue

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seven tea-duty campaigns, cost an expence of Scots blood, to the value of eighteen millions sterling. The war might have been avoided with the greatest facility. In the historical register of Edinburgh, for the month of December, 1791, there is a curious calculation, founded on the authority of Sir John Sinclair's statistical reports. By this, it becomes very probable, that Scotland contains ninety-six thousand females more than males. It is known, that the number of boys born exceeds that of girls; and hence this deficiency must be ascribed to war and emigration. It has been stated above, that more than six hundred thousand pounds of taxes raised from the Scots, are fairly carried into the British exchequer; and our absentees at London, who spend the rent of their estates in that receptacle of profligacy, may be estimated at an additional three hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. The total sum raised in Scotland, during the year 1788, by government, was about one million and ninety-nine thousand pounds. This includes a conjectural article of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds as the duty paid upon goods manufactured in England, taxed there, and sent down to Scotland for consumption. Of the one million and ninety-nine thousand pounds sterling, about six hundred and thirty thousand pounds went in that year into the English exchequer. The remaining four hundred and sixty thousand pounds, if managed with œconomy, would have been much more than sufficient for all the purposes of civil government, and the six hundred thousand guineas might have been saved to the public. If the union had never existed, the three hundred thousand pounds *per annum* for absentees, would likewise have remained in Scotland. If we had enjoyed a wise, virtuous, and independent government, nine hundred thousand pounds a year would have been retained in this poor, despised, and enslaved country, which at present goes out of it. Shut up in a remote peninsula, where nobody comes to molest us, we, Scotsmen, have no natural business with Falkland's islands, or Nootka Sound, with the wilds of Canada, or the suburbs of Oczakow. The farmers of Fife and Lanerk, are little concerned

cerned in the squabbles between Tipoo Saib, and a corporation of English merchants. Shepherds in Galloway spend their winter evenings without a fire, and weavers of Glasgow go supperless to bed, for the sake of a Dutch frontier, and the balance of usurpation between German tyrants. For such wise ends, we pay six hundred thousand guineas a year. We are not suffered to fish cod upon our own coasts, but we fight eight or ten years at a stretch for leave to catch it on the banks of Newloundland. Since the revolution, Scotland has furnished the British army and navy with three or four hundred thousand recruits, while, at the same time, England suffered eighty thousand of our ancestors to die, in a single year, of hunger.

These particulars may assist us in comprehending the destruction produced to North-Britain by the present system of administration. Switzerland is reported, in round numbers, to contain twelve thousand square miles, and two millions of people. The soil is barren, and its surface encumbered with tremendous mountains, yet every acre of land is improved. The beauty of the country, and the felicity of its inhabitants, fill, with rapture, the pages of travellers. North-Britain, and its western islands, exclusive of Orkney and Shetland, form an area of at least thirty thousand square miles. The money and the blood expended in foolish wars, would have converted the whole country, like the Swiss cantons, into garden's, corn-fields and pastures. In proportion to the Helvetic population, we should have amounted to five millions, besides another million supported by the fisheries, and by the manufactures to which they give rise. Instead of six millions, the number of people in Scotland does not exceed about sixteen hundred thousand.

This mournful chapter is now approaching to a conclusion. I shall only just remind the reader of the massacre at Culloden, where Hanoverian ferocity exhibited its utmost horror. About two thousand of the miserable rebels were cut to pieces. The wounded were *butchered in cold blood*. The particulars must be deferred till some future opportunity. By a very strange act
of

of parliament, the Duke of Cumberland received, for his services, a pension of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling, added to fifteen thousand pounds, which he had before.* The ruffians who performed such work, at six-pence a day, were still more execrable than those who sat them on. The toad-eating Scots exulted in this tragical consummation of victory. The wretched newspapers of that æra, were crouded with verses in praise of his royal highness. The circumstances of the battle of Culloden itself, and the mean and barbarous exultation which it produced, were alike disgraceful to the name of Britain. Cumberland continues to be remembered in Scotland, by the significant appellation of *The bloody Duke*.

CHAPTER IV.

Blackstone—His idea of the English constitution—Default of an hundred and seventy-one millions sterling—Powell—Bembridge—Mary Talbot—Westminster election—Anecdotes of the war with America—English Dissenters—Their law-suit with the corporation of London—Society of friends—Unparalleled oppression of that sect in England—Boxing.

THE annals of Scotland present us with a series of frightful massacres. For any purpose of moral utility which it can answer, the whole narrative had better be forgotten. During the last forty years, one half of our historians have exhausted their talents to revile the memory of George Buchanan, by far the greatest literary character that North-Britain ever produced, to decide whether Mary Stuart wrote some very stupid letters

† This pension served to swell "the loaded COMPOST HEAP of corrupt influence." Vide Mr. Burke's Speech, as to reforming the civil list, on the 11th of February, 1790.

in French and Latin, and whether Henry Darnly was a cuckold. We shall certainly find superior entertainment in the history of England, which, as her poets and historians tell us, hath always been the native seat of liberty. Here is a specimen.

"During the reigns of Charles and James the second, above sixty thousand Non-conformists suffered, of whom *five thousand* DIED IN PRISON. On a moderate computation, these persons were pillaged of *fourteen millions* of property. Such was the tolerating, liberal, candid spirit of the church of England.* This estimate cannot be intended to include Scotland; for it is likely that here alone, episcopacy sacrificed sixty thousand victims. Of all sorts of follies, the records of the church form the most outrageous burlesque on the human understanding. As to Charles the second, it is full time that we should be spared from the hereditary insult of a holiday for his baneful restoration.

At five per cent. of compound interest, a sum doubles in fourteen years and one hundred and five days, or seven times in a century. Put the case, that these fourteen millions of property were taken from the English dissenters at once, in 1678, and that they would have doubled eight times between that period, and the present year, 1792. This is taking the loss on the most moderate terms. By such an account, the sect, are, at this day, poorer, in consequence of these persecutions, than they otherwise would have been, by the sum of three thousand, five hundred and eighty-four millions sterling.

"Our *religious* liberties were fully established at the reformation: but the recovery of our civil and political liberties was a work of longer time; they not being thoroughly and completely regained till after the restoration of king Charles, nor fully and explicitly acknowledged and defined, till the æra of the happy revolution. Of a constitution so wisely contrived, so strongly raised, and so highly finished, it is hard to speak with that praise, which is justly and severely

* Hower, on the French Constitution, p. 437, and his authorities.

" its due. The thorough and attentive contemplation of it
 " will furnish its best panegyric. It hath been the endeavour
 " of these commentaries, however the execution may have suc-
 " ceeded, to examine its solid foundations, to mark out its ex-
 " tensive plan, to explain the use and distribution of its parts,
 " and from the harmonious concurrences of those several parts,
 " to demonstrate the elegant proportion of the whole. We
 " have taken occasion to admire, at every turn, the noble mo-
 " duments of ancient simplicity, and the more curious refine-
 " ments (salt-bonds, and so forth,) of modern art. Nor have
 " its faults been concealed from view; for *faults it has* (wón-
 " derful!), lest we should be tempted to think of it more than
 " HUMAN STRUCTURE.* The federal constitution of
 North-America looks, at least upon paper, as well as that of
 Britain. James Madison, Esq. of Virginia, is reported to
 have been its chief author. The citizens of the united states,
 or at least a great majority of their number, regard this consti-
 tution with attachment and admiration; but they never speak
 of Mr. Madison as a *divinity*. They do not imagine, that six
 or eight hundred years of botching were, as in England, requi-
 site, before a political cub could be licked into any tolerable
 shape; for two or three years at the utmost, were employed in
 framing the present American constitution. In the passage now
 quoted, Sir William Blackstone has only adopted the ordinary
 cant of the English nation. If any member of congress were to
 speak in such a strain as to the legislative system of that coun-
 try, the whole assembly would consider him as positively crazed.
 As to the "happy revolution," the reader may judge
 from what follows. "Two hundred thousand pounds a year
 " *bestowed upon the parliament*, have already (1693), drawn
 " out of the pockets of the subjects, MORE MONEY, than *all*
 " *our kings since the conquest have had from the nation*. The
 " king (William) has about six score members, whom I can
 " reckon, who are in places, and are thereby so entirely at his

+ Commentaries on the Laws of England, by Sir William Blackstone, book IV.
 chap. xxxiii.

" devotion,

" devotion, that though they have mortal feuds, *when out of the house*, and though they are violently opposite parties, in their notions of government, yet they vote as lumpingly as *the lawn sleeves*. The house is so *officered* by those who have places and pensions, that the king can baffle any bill, quash all grievances, and stifle all accompts."* As to the lawn sleeves, the twenty-six fees of England, are estimated at ninety-two thousand five hundred pounds, and the twenty-two Irish fees, at seventy-four thousand pounds, which is in whole one hundred and sixty-six thousand, five hundred pounds. On a medium, each of these forty-eight parsons thus receive three thousand, four hundred and sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings sterling *per annum*.

Knowledge, like charity, ought to begin at home. If the British nation had been thoroughly acquainted with the true character of their own government, they would have saved themselves the trouble of much impertinent encomium upon it, and of many contemptuous and unprovoked comparisons between the political situation of their neighbours and themselves. Sir William Blackstone, and other writers, speak about the *glorious* revolution; but what *glory* could be annexed to the affair, it is not easy to see. An infatuated old tyrant was deserted by all the world, and *fled* from his dominions. His people chose a successor. This was natural enough, but it had no connection with *glory*. James *ran* away, which precluded all opportunities for heroism. The character of the leaders in the revolution will not justify a violent encomium on the purity of their motives. The selection of William was reprobated very soon after, by themselves, which excludes any pretence to much political foresight. Here then is a *glorious* event, accomplished without an actual effort of courage, of integrity, or of wisdom. When the Swifs, the Scots, the Americans, the Corsicans, or the Dutch, wrestled against the superior forces of despotism, these were scenes of glory, and panegyric becomes intelligible. But when no resistance happened,

* Burgh's Political Disquisitions, Vol. I. p. 450.

the dismissions of a king and a coachman were equally remote from it.

One of the principle duties of a national government, is to take care that the revenues may be duly applied to the service of the public. But when we look into this branch of administration, the grossest peculation every where meets our enquiries. Let us take in one hand the commentaries of Blackstone, and in the other, the reports of the commissioners of public accounts, and we shall see how the panegyrist agrees with the accomptant. The tenth report, which is dated the 1st of July, 1783, contains the following, among other curious passages, "The business of the auditor of the imprest, to be collected from his commission, is to audit the accounts of most of the receivers, and of all the officers and persons entrusted with the expenditure of the public revenue.—The accounts which at this day remain for the audit of the exchequer, are *seventy four millions*, the issues of twenty one years, for the navy service; *fifty eight millions*, the issues of eighteen years, for the army service; near *thirty nine millions* issued to sub-accountants; together, *one hundred and seventy one millions*; the receipts and issues of all the provisions for the support of the land forces in America and the West-Indies, during the late war: all these accounts must be passed. The public have a right and good cause to demand it." Here is an account of a *hundred and seventy one millions sterling*, that has arrived at the mature age of *twenty one years*, without a settlement. The reader may pause and stare, but the report is attested by five commissioners, and published by order of government. There is no great breach of charity in suspecting that fifty or sixty millions, out of these one hundred and seventy one millions, have been sunk in the pockets of those who handled them. In this report, Mr. John Powell, acting executor of lord Holland, and cashier of the pay-office, makes a principle figure. In 1783, Mr. Powell cut his own throat. His friend Mr. Bembridge, accountant of the pay-office, had examined and passed some accounts between lord Holland and the exchequer.

chequer. For this service, he claimed and received two thousand six hundred pounds. It was afterwards found, that forty eight thousand seven hundred pounds, chargeable against lord Holland, had been improperly concealed, and Bembridge was prosecuted for breach of trust. His counsellor, Mr. Bearcroft, urged a kind of defence, which placed the lawyer and his client exactly on a level. He said, that the original blame, if there was any, rested with the late Mr. Powell, who was the benefactor of Mr. Bembridge, and that it would have been ungenerous in the latter to have betrayed the former. Lord North, Mr. Burke, and several other birds of the same feather, gave Bembridge the highest character for *integrity*. Lord Mansfield was of a quite opposite opinion. The Jury found Bembridge guilty. He was fined in two thousand six hundred pounds, and condemned to six months of imprisonment. The author of the new annual register, for 1783, says, that "he bore this *very heavy judgment* with great fortitude and composure." His *composure* must be ascribed to an hardened front. The fine was but nominal, as he only repaid money which he had not earned; and for an intended fraud of forty eight thousand pounds, so trifling a confinement, in which he could enjoy all the luxuries of life, was no punishment at all. If Bembridge had been a poorer man, it is likely that his sentence would have been very different, at least, if we may conjecture from the following case. "On the 18th of December, 1790, at the adjourned session of the Old Bailey, Mary Talbot refused to accept his majesty's pardon. She said that her return from transportation, was on account of three dear infants, and that as she could not take them with her, *she had rather die*. The recorder pointed out the dreadful precipice on which she stood; as it was most likely, when her refusal was intimated to his majesty, that she would be ordered for execution. She still persisted, and was taken from the bar *in strong convulsions*." This article is copied from a London newspaper. The original crime, or the subsequent fate of Mary Talbot, I have not learned. She had most likely been transported

transported for some petty theft; and after enduring the agony of a thousand deaths, was now to be hanged for it; while Bembridge escaped with what was equal to no sentence at all. A man must possess the apathy of marble, who can read this parallel without indignation. Scotland, for her humble share in the blessings of such a government, pays six hundred thousand guineas of net cash *per annum*, transported entirely out of the country; besides her paying very smartly for soldiers, tide-waiters, excisemen, and all other sorts of constitutional caterpillars. Great and manifold have been the advantages of the union. It was highly worth our while to borrow twenty thousand pounds from the treasury of England* to secure this treaty by the purchase of a majority in our incorruptible parliament. When Horace Walpole discovered that Scotsmen had more sense than other people, † he had certainly been thinking of this loan, or of the verses that we published in praise of the Duke of Cumberland, after the battle of Culloden, or of our attempting to found a colony under the equinoctial line, at an expence of five hundred thousand pounds sterling, while two hundred thousand Scotch men, women, and children, were begging from door to door, and thousands and ten thousands of others were dying of hunger. Perhaps he was also reflecting upon our magnanimous conflagration of a Roman Catholic chapel, at Edinburgh, about fifteen years ago, and upon our heroically raising a few regiments, after the defeat of Burgoyne, in 1777, to subscribe a second convention at Saratoga. Or Mr. Walpole may have been absorbed in admiration of the management of our royal boroughs, where twenty or thirty self-elected persons govern the revenues of the whole community. The city of Edinburgh, including Leith, has about eighty thousand inhabitants, and an income that may be guessed at about sixty, or an hundred thousand pounds sterling. This revenue is under the *absolute* management of between thirty and forty self-elected individuals; while the citizens at large

* *Supra.* chap. 3.

† Catalogue of Royal and noble authors.

have no more to say in the disposal of this money, than an equal number of Greeks or Jews in the administration of the revenues of the Grand Turk. Let us proceed with the subject of national expenditure, and illustrate what Blackstone so happily terms *the more curious refinements of modern art*.

Some times a British minister gives an example of œconomy; for instance, in the case between George Smith, a publican of Westminster, and George Rose, Esq. joint secretary to the treasury, clerk of the parliament, master of the plea-office, and representative for the borough of Christ Church. Mr. Smith was an agent employed by Mr. Rose, in the contested election for Westminster, between Lord Hood, and Lord John Townshend. Mr. Smith detected six hundred bad votes, that had been given for Lord John Townshend. In this business he was engaged from the 21st of September, 1789, to the 17th of April following, a space of thirty weeks; and Mr. Smith charged for his services half a guinea per day. The account amounted, at this rate, to one hundred and ten pounds five shillings sterling, or three shillings and eight-pence for each vote. Mr. Smith was a person in decent circumstances; and as this task was neither agreeable, nor even reputable, his demand seems to have been extremely moderate. A great part of the money must have been expended in doing the work. The account, when it first appeared, was stated in these words, *six hundred bad votes, bludgeon-men. &c. humbly submitted*. On the 21st of July, 1791, the cause was tried before a special jury, in the court of King's-Bench, and Rose was cast; so that, this experiment of ministerial frugality was not successful. Smith had been prosecuted in an excise-court, and after a suit of three years, condemned in a fine of fifty pounds. Rose interfered, and half of the fine was not paid. This account is extracted from that printed of the trial. As to the defence, Mr. Erskine, counsel for the plaintiff, said, that a more mean, paltry, shabby, contemptible one, he never saw brought into a court of justice. Mr. Rose must hold an elector of Westminster very cheap, if he does not imagine his vote worth three

shillings and eight-pence. In a Westminster election, at least, there seems to be nothing of "*more than human structure.*"

The seventh report of the commissioners of public accounts bears date the 19th day of June, 1782. The subject of it is the expenditure of public money in America, during the last war. "The hire only of waggons, horses, and *drivers*, employed under the management of the quarter-master general, from the 25th of December, 1776, to the 31st of March, 1780, was three hundred and thirty-eight thousand, four hundred and thirty-five pounds, eight shillings, and six pence three farthings, exclusive of provisions, forage, repairs, and other contingent expences." The commissioners next state the actual price of waggons and horses, and the common rate at which they were hired. They affirm, that the owner of such a waggon and horses received back his purchase-money, *in less than five months.* "After which, if possessed of fifty large waggons, and two hundred horses (and the waggons and horses were, in general, the property of a few officers only), he will have, as long as he can continue them in the service of government, a clear income of nine thousand eight hundred and eighty five pounds eight shillings and four pence, a year, *secure from all risk.*" The hire of the whole waggons and horses employed by the British troops, was, upon a medium, eighty seven thousand, nine hundred and fifty-one pounds per annum. "The prime cost of the waggons and horses, *at the highest price*, is forty four thousand one hundred and fifty pounds. This sum being deducted from eighty seven thousand, nine hundred and fifty one pounds, leaves the clear profit of *forty-three thousand eight hundred and one pounds*, for the first year." From the subsequent part of the time, the purchase-money of the horses and waggons did not fall to be deducted, so that the profits became exorbitant. In the short period of three years and a quarter, this statement "gives the sum of two hundred and forty one thousand, six hundred and ninety pounds, paid by the public, beyond what it would have cost them, had the property

" of

" of these waggons and horses belonged to government." In a word, the public paid all together, two hundred and eighty five thousand, seven hundred and forty pounds, for the hire of horses and waggons, when the horses and waggons themselves could have been purchased for forty four thousand, one hundred and fifty pounds. The reader will observe, that the incidental expences or damage, for example, the death of a horse, or the breaking of a wheel, were paid for over and above by the public. A homely comparison may illustrate this abuse. A tradesman goes into a tap-room, and calls for a quart of porter, of which the common price is four pence. He gives the waiter half a crown, and, instead of drinking the liquor, he throws it into the face of the best customer that has ever entered his shop. Every body would imagine such a man out of his senses. The conduct of the British parliament justifies the suspicion of the king of Prussia, that they had certainly been bitten by a mad-dog.* They paid, in the above instance, about seven times the real price of waggons and horses for the hire of them, and these, when hired, were employed in traversing the continent of America, in the rear of immense bands of highwaymen who were to load them with booty, while the British merchants and manufacturers might have been acquiring millions of guineas, by an amicable and honest intercourse with that very country. Sir William Blackstone says, that a thorough and attentive contemplation of the English constitution, will furnish its best panegyric. This constitution can only be valuable, in the same degree that it is practicable, for, *if it cannot be reduced to practice*, it is of no more use than the republic of Plato, or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. When we examine it, by the test of experience, we are immediately overwhelmed in an ocean of follies, and of crimes. Nothing can more compleatly prove its extreme imperfection, than the manner in which the British nation is every day bubbled out of its public money. The seventh report, which we are now quoting, forms a striking monument of the gross manner in

* Vide Introduction.

which

which we have been cheated. These reports compose one of the most instructive, and useful publications, that ever appeared in any country. They contain mountains of incontestible evidence, that a great part of the constitution, *if we are to judge by the present practice of it*, is absolutely, and irrecoverably rotten; and yet, I have never seen them quoted in any one of the numerous pamphlets that are constantly issuing from the presses of political reformation. I do not recollect to have heard even their existence mentioned by any person whatever; and though they must be perfectly familiar to a few individuals, they are as totally unknown to the great body of the people, as the archives of Memphis. As being of higher authority than the performance of any private remarker can be, they seem proper to be placed in opposition to Sir William Blackstone. We shall, for the present, quit them, with the following particulars.

From the 1st of January, 1776, to the 31st of December, 1781, ten millions, and eighty-three thousand, eight hundred and sixty-three pounds, two shillings and six-pence sterling, were transmitted to North-America, for the extraordinary services of the British army, within that period. Of these ten millions, it is to be apprehended, that five or six millions were pilfered on their way to the public service. The commissioners give long details of fraud and imposition. The following passage is a satisfactory specimen of the style of their report; at the same time, that it condenses much interesting information.

“ Of the ten millions and upwards that have been issued for these services to North-America, within the last six years, accounts of a few officers only, amounting to about eleven hundred thousand pounds, have been as yet rendered in the proper office. The accounts of about one hundred and forty thousand pounds more are ready; so that the expenditure of eight millions, and seven hundred and sixty thousand pounds, still remains to be accounted for.

“ By an account of the yearly average number of his majesty's forces serving at New-York, and its dependencies,
“ from

“ from the 1st of January, 1776, to the 31st of December,
 “ 1780, extracted from returns of those forces made to us
 “ from the war-office, pursuant to our requisition, it ap-
 “ pears that the number of the forces decreased every year from
 “ 1778; but, from the accounts of the contractors for remit-
 “ ting, the issue for the extraordinary services of that army,
 “ greatly encreased during the same period.

“ In the account of the issues to the officers in the four de-
 “ partments, we find that the warrants issued to the quarter-
 “ master generals, since the 16th of July, 1780, and to the
 “ barrack-master general since the 29th of June, 1780, and
 “ to the commissaries general, since the 25th of May, 1778,
 “ have been all temporary, for sums on account; that no
 “ final warrant has been granted since those several periods.
 “ So that these sums have been issued, without even the cere-
 “ mony of a quarterly abstract, and the confidential reliance
 “ on the officer, that his vouchers are forth coming.

“ Of these ten millions, there have been issued to Canada,
 “ between the 1st of June, 1776, and the 23d of October last,
 “ two millions, two hundred and thirty-six thousand, and
 “ twenty pounds, eleven shillings and seven-pence; a pro-
 “ vince, whose military operations, since the year 1777, the
 “ public are not made acquainted with. This issue has been
 “ increasing every year, and no apparent reason for it; and
 “ upon the expenditure in this province, there exists no check
 “ or controul that we know of whatever. These are circum-
 “ stances of *suspicion* and *alarm*.”

The following law-suit deserves particular notice, because
 the proceedings which give rise to it, were not the actions of a
 single individual, but composed a deliberate conspiracy by one
 great body of people in England, against the property of ano-
 ther. At the same time it serves to exhibit “ the harmonious
 “ concurrence, the elegant proportion, and the more curious
 “ *refinements* of modern art.”

In the year 1748, the corporation of London resolved to
 build a mansion-house. The scheme required money, and to
 procure

procure it, they passed a by-law. They pretended to be anxious for getting *fit* and *able* persons to serve the office of sheriff to the corporation, and they imposed a fine of four hundred pounds and twenty marks upon every person, who, being nominated by the lord-mayor, declined to stand the election in the common-hall. Six hundred pounds were laid upon every person, who, being elected by the common-hall, refused to serve that office. The fines thus raised, were appropriated for building the mansion-house. In consequence of this law, several dissenters were nominated, and elected to the office of sheriff. By the corporation act, made in the thirteenth year of Charles the second, no person could be elected as sheriff, unless he had taken the sacrament, in the church of England, within a year preceding the time of his election. If he accepted the office, without this qualification, he was expressly punishable by the statute. If a dissenter, therefore, had, in virtue of such an election, acted as sheriff, he would have been severely chastised. Hence the gentlemen of that persuasion refused the office, and paid their fines, to the amount of more than fifteen thousand pounds sterling. One of the persons thus elected was blind; another was bed-ridden. These were the *fit* and *able* persons, whom the corporation of London chose as sheriffs. The practice went on for several years.

This corporation of London had been an assembly of the most arrant sharpers, or such a project for building a mansion-house never could have entered into their minds. It is impossible, that any mortal, possessing a spark of common honesty, should have been concerned in it. At last Allen Evans, Esq. a dissenter, refused to pay this fine. An action was brought against him in the sheriff court of the corporation of London; and in September, 1757, judgment was given against him. He appealed to the court of hustings, another city court, and in 1759 the judgment was affirmed a second time. At last it came before the house of lords, where, on the 4th of February, 1767, it was finally set aside. We are not informed whether Mr. Evans paid his own expences. If he did so, it might have been

been cheaper for him to pay the fine. On this occasion, Lord Mansfield pronounced a speech. "The defendant," said his Lordship, "was by law incapable, at the time of his pretended election: and it is my firm persuasion that he was chosen because *he was incapable*. If he had been capable, he had not been chosen: for they did not want him to serve the office. They chose him, because, without a breach of the law, and an usurpation on the crown, he could not serve the office. They chose him, that he might fall under the penalty of their by-law, *made to serve a particular purpose*.—By such a by-law, the corporation have it in their power to make every dissenter pay a fine of six hundred pounds, or *any sum they please*; for it amounts to that."*

In this speech, Lord Mansfield expresses the utmost detestation against every kind of religious persecution, as against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy. He declares, that he never read, without rapture, the liberal sentiments of De Thou on this subject. His lordship then adds these remarkable words. "I am sorry that of late, his countrymen (the French) have begun to open their eyes, see their error, and *adopt his sentiments*. I should not have *broke my heart* (I hope I may say so, without breach of *christian charity*), if France had continued to cherish the Jesuits, and *to persecute the hugenots*." When Nero set fire to Rome, or when Caligula wished that the Roman people had only one neck, they might have been partly excused, as either drunk or mad. Neither of these humble apologies can be advanced for Lord Mansfield. When the Tartars once conquered China, it was proposed, in a council of war, to extirpate the inhabitants, and turn the country into pasture. As his lordship was not a Tartar, nor had any prospect of driving a herd of cattle through France, he still remains without an excuse or motive, as to the *case in point*, that could lead him to such a horrid sentiment. We shall quit this subject, with a short

* Letters to the honourable Mr. Justice Blackstone, by Philip Burneaux, D.D. Appendix, No. 2.

citation from *The sincere Huron*. "He talked," says Voltaire, "of the revocation of the edict of Nantes with so much energy, he deplored, in so pathetic a manner, the fate of fifty thousand fugitive families, and of fifty thousand others, converted by dragoons, that the ingenuous Hercules could not refrain from shedding tears."

It is foreign to the plan of this work, to enter into a detail of all the outrages which have been committed upon English dissenters; but there is an assertion in a letter published by George Rous, Esq. that cannot be passed over. Speaking of the late riots at Birmingham, he has these words. "Government love an occasional riot, which, with the assistance of the military, is easily suppressed; in the mean time, it alarms the votaries of a sordid luxury; makes them crouch for protection; and teaches them patiently to endure evils imposed by the hand of power. Accordingly, for more than a month, preceding the 14th of July, all the daily prints in the interest of the treasury, laboured to excite a tumult." He adds, "to let loose the rigours of justice, might have been a cruel sacrifice of their friends." This gentleman is a member of the house of commons, and of respectable character and abilities. He thus expressly charges the British ministry with having excited incendiaries to burn the houses of peaceable citizens. The practice of Mr. Pitt corresponds with the theory of Lord Mansfield.

An act of religious toleration and relief is to take place in Scotland, within six months after the 1st of July, 1792. It contains the following clause. "If any person shall be present twice in the same year, at divine service, in any episcopal chapel or meeting-house in Scotland, whereof the pastor or minister shall not pray in express words for his majesty, by name, for his majesty's heirs or successors, and for all the royal family, in the manner herein before directed, every person so present, shall, on lawful conviction thereof, for the first offence, forfeit the sum of five pounds, sterling money." One half of the fine goes to the informer, and if the culprit cannot

cannot pay, he is to suffer six months of imprisonment. For any future offence, conviction produces two years of imprisonment. In virtue of this act, it would be very easy for a swindling parson to fleece his flock. He has only to get his chapel as completely filled as possible, to place two or three informers in every corner of it, and then, in his prayers, to forbear all mention of his most sacred majesty. If four hundred persons were present, this might be converted into a job of two thousand pounds sterling; as the statute makes no exceptions in favour of those who should interrupt the person in the midst of the service. The principal actor in the farce, might, by connivance, abscond; but there is still one difficulty unprovided for. The informers themselves must have been present at the perpetration of this crime, and therefore they are equally guilty with the rest of the audience. It ought to be stipulated, that every informer is, in the first place, to receive his own pardon. The rest of the act is of a piece.

The institution of Sunday Schools was at first highly popular in England. The established clergy have since become jealous of the plan, and Mr. Rous, himself a churchman, gives, in his letter, some authentic and shameful examples of this fact. The church of England, in spite of many excellent characters among its divines, appears to be somewhat lame in its *political* principles. Its champion, Dr. Tatham, one of the *ablest* incendiaries at Birmingham, published a letter some time ago, which has these words. "It would be a terrible thing, indeed, if all the people of England should learn to read and write." Since the publication of his letter, Dr. Tatham has received a promotion in one of the English universities, an article of intelligence that hath been formally announced in the public newspapers. From this circumstance it appears, that certain members of English universities, instead of wanting to illuminate the minds of the people, are anxious to keep them in the dark. From their approbation of Dr. Tatham, a natural inference is, that we ought all, as quickly as possible, to forget our alphabet; and consequently, that universities themselves

selves are to become useless. At present, some of their members appear to be much worse than useless, since they desire to level the rest of their fellow-creatures to the rank of dogs and horses. We ought to have prevented the citizens of Boston and Philadelphia from learning to read and write. If they had not been able to read their charters, they hardly could have discovered the breach of them. Such are the present principles that guide the internal administration of England. The houses of dissenters are burnt, and the rabble of the church are to be prevented from learning to subscribe their names. The baseness and absurdity of our behaviour to foreign nations vanishes in an abyss of domestic infamy.

No man has any business to interfere with the religious opinions of his neighbour. As for a national church, we might as well set up a national laboratory, and oblige every person to buy a periodical quantity of pills. It is just as reasonable to make a man pay for drugs that he will not swallow, as for sermons that he will not hear. If we must have tyrants, ten thousand apothecaries would be less pestiferous than a corporation of ten thousand such vandals as Horseley and Tatham. If every clergyman had, like St. Paul, been a journeyman carpenter, and delivered his sermons without a fee, we should not have heard quite so much of theological butchery. Look into ecclesiastical history, and you will there see, that in consequence of *episcopal* ambition, a thousand pitched battles have been fought, ten thousand cities have sunk in ashes and blood, a million of gibbets have been erected, and an hundred millions of throats cut. From the restoration of Charles the second, to the revolution, a space of twenty-eight years, one half of the Scotch nation were hunted like hares and partridges, by bishops and their biped blood-hounds. Englishmen have insulted the rest of mankind, as ignorant of their civil and religious rights. The following narrative will explain the present claim of England to the epithet of a *free* country, and whether it is not, in some degree, as Dr. Johnson says of Jamaica, "a den of tyrants, and a dungeon of slaves."

On

On the 3d of July, 1789, the order of the day in the British house of peers, was for the second reading of the bill "for preventing vexatious proceedings with respect to tythes, dues, or other ecclesiastical, or spiritual profit." Earl Stanhope, who had brought in this bill, moved, that it should be committed. His lordship explained the religious scruples, which prevented quakers from paying tythes. Their scruples were recognized by law. By an act of parliament, in the reign of king William, it was enacted, that tythes due by quakers, might be recovered in a manner different from tythes due by any other persons; providing always, that the sum to be levied, was *under ten pounds*. If the sum was higher, they were still at the mercy of *the church*; so that even this act of protection was very defective. The earl said, that after this *humane* law had past, the common way of recovering tythes from a quaker, was by application to two justices of the peace, who granted a warrant to distress his goods. Of late, some clergyman have not been contented with recovering their tythes, in this way, but have seized and imprisoned the quakers themselves. About two months ago, his lordship said, that a quaker, a man of some property, had been cast into the common jail of Worcester; he was there still, and, though confined for a sum of only five shillings, *must remain there for life*.

The act of William is in itself imperfect; but besides, two methods are known, by which it can be evaded, or strictly speaking, contradicted. In the first place, the statute book, that jumble of juridical deformity, contains an unrepealed law past in the reign of Henry the eighth, * which affords full scope to ecclesiastical vengeance. By this act, which was made above an hundred years before the sect of quakers existed,

* An hundred sheets of paper would not be large enough to contain the catalogue of his majesty's crimes. "He was sincere, open, gallant, liberal, and capable at least of a temporary friendship and attachment." History of the house of Tudor, by Mr. Hume, chap. xii. He murdered his wife Anne Boleyn, by the verdict of a jury of twenty-six English peers; a verdict that shews what wretches both peers and jurors may sometimes be. The day after the massacre of this unfortunate woman, he married another. In the course of his *Reformation*, ninety colleges, and an hundred and ten hospitals, for the relief of the poor, were, by one act of parliament, annihilated.

when any man refused to pay his tythe, application was directed to be made to two justices of the peace. They " shall
 " have power to attach the person against whom such request
 " shall be made, and commit him to ward, there to remain,
 " without bail or mainprize, until he shall have found sufficient surety, to be bound by recognizance or otherwise, to
 " give due obedience to the process, decrees, and sentences of the ecclesiastical court." Lord Stanhope subjoined, that as quakers, by their religion, never can give such obedience, this law is, to all quakers, *imprisonment for life*. By several other acts, the refusal to pay tythes, makes the offender subject to excommunication in a spiritual court, and that again is to be followed by imprisonment. The sum of the whole was, that the act passed in the reign of William to protect the quakers, had no real value.

At Coventry, his lordship stated, that six quakers had lately been prosecuted for about four-pence each, as easter offerings. The expences of the spiritual court charged against them, came to an hundred and sixty-five pounds, eleven shillings sterling. Their own expences were an hundred and twenty-eight pounds one shilling and six-pence. Two shillings of easter offerings were thus to cost two hundred and ninety-three pounds, twelve shillings and six-pence of expences. The authors of this prosecution could, by application to two justices of the peace have recovered their two shillings, at the charge of perhaps two or three guineas. " As, by their religion, the quakers can never
 " pay, nor any of the other quakers for them, some of them have
 " been excommunicated; the consequence of which is, that
 " they cannot act as executors, that they cannot sue in any
 " court, to recover any debt due to them, and in forty days after excommunication, they are liable to be sent to prison,
 " there to remain till death shall deliver them from a jail,
 " where they may be dying for years, and perish by inches;
 " and this merely for the sake of a few pence; which few pence
 " even might have been immediately recovered by means of
 " the humane act of king William, had the priest thought
 " fit.

*fit.** It was criminal in the legislature to leave them at his mercy.

"These," said Earl Stanhope, "are instances of ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression, and of cold, deliberate and consummate cruelty, which would disgrace any set of men whatever." Some persons at Coventry, who were not of the society of friends, raised money by subscription, to put a stop to the prosecutions against these six men. But Lord Stanhope was of opinion, that the remedy would be dangerous, if not fatal, to the whole society. This example of humanity would only serve to whet the avarice of the proctors of the spiritual court. "Every quaker in the kingdom," said his Lordship, "may, as the law now stands, be *imprisoned for life*; and it is the more cruel, for persons so imprisoned, are *not admitted to bail*." The bill that gave rise to these remarks was rejected.

The philosophical ideas of Dr. Tatham have made considerable progress among his countrymen. In Scotland, it is the bitterest reproach to tell any man that even his grand-father could not read. In England, the case is sometimes otherwise; and the utter destitution of acquaintance with an alphabet, is visible in the gross manners of some individuals among the ordinary classes. The disgraceful practice of boxing, continues to be highly popular in England. Thirty, forty, or fifty thousand pounds are sometimes betted among the spectators, on the prowess of a favourite champion. Ten thousand persons have been known to travel fifty miles to attend a match of this kind; which is always accompanied by a variety of inferior battles amongst the mob. The price for tickets of admission within the palisadoes, is commonly half a guinea; but they are very frequently overturned, in the course of the combat, by the tempestuous curiosity of the rabble. The high roads from London to the scene of action are, on such occasions, crowded with carriages and horsemen; and the inns and ale-houses, for a considerable distance round the country, are sure of being

* Debrecht's Parliamentary Debates, vol. xxvi. part second, p. 264.

overwhelmed with customers. It is usual for the partisans of each combatant to bring cockades in their pockets; which, if he gains the victory, are transferred to their hats. The first nobility and gentry make no scruple to officiate on the stage as umpires, bottle-holders, and seconds. They commence pupils to the "professors of the *science* of pugillism," and are ambitious of being consulted in settling the terms of a match. One of the various treatises on this *noble* subject has been dedicated to Lord Barrymore, with rapturous encomiums on his Lordship's proficiency in the art. The antagonists are usually knocked down ten, fifteen, or twenty times, before the contest comes to an end. The printers of newspapers dispatch emissaries to the spot; and fortunate is he who can obtain, by express, the most early detail of the particulars of the engagement; which are transferred into the monthly magazines for the edification of the rising age.

In Scotland or Ireland, an Englishman, who behaves properly, may reside, to the end of his life, without hearing a single national reproach. But one-half of the inhabitants of England display the most illiberal contempt for the rest of mankind, that ever distinguished a civilized people. "Some years ago," says Dr. Wendeborn, "scarcely any body durst speak French in the streets of London, or in public places, without running the risque of being insulted by the populace, who took any foreign language to be French; and frequently saluted him, who spoke what they did not understand, with the appellation of *French dog*." This practice becomes highly ridiculous, when we reflect that London affords a hospitable rendezvous to half the swindlers, quacks, and adventurers in Europe; nor is there any other nation, which, both abroad and at home, affords such numerous and egregious bubbles. On the continent, an English traveller is constantly marked out by landlords, tradesmen, connoisseurs, and fiddlers, as a victim of peculiar imposition; though it is true, that these gentry very frequently find themselves mistaken. In the last century, England possessed a very extensive commerce in the Levant;
and

and the polite custom above quoted from Dr. Wendeborn, has, very likely, been imported from the streets of Constantinople, the only other metropolis, at least on the surface of this planet, where it is usual to address strangers with a similar salutation.

CHAPTER V.

Civil list—Accumulation of fifteen millions—Dog kennels—George the First—His liberal ideas of government—George the Second—His hospitality at the burial of his eldest son—Excise.

“IT is impossible to maintain that dignity, which a king of Great-Britain ought to maintain, with an income in any degree less, than what is now established by parliament.”* Sir John Sinclair has given a long account of the civil list. By this, it appears, that between two and three hundred thousand pounds annually are paid out of it, for efficient officers of state, ambassadors and judges, for example. In 1788, the royal family, with its fiddlers, chaplains, wet nurses, lords of the bed-chamber, rockers, groom of the stole, and nymphs of the close-stool, a station worth forty-eight pounds a year, cost all together, about six hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling. Mr. Burgh speaks in the following terms of the civil list.

“There we find places piled on places, to the height of the tower of Babel. There we find a master of the household, treasurer of the household, comptroller of the household, cofferer of the household, deputy-cofferer of the household, clerks of the household, clerks comptrollers of the household, clerks comptrollers deputy-clerks of the household, office-keepers, chamber-keepers, necessary-house-keepers, pur-

* Commentaries on the Laws of England, by Sir William Blackstone, book I. chap. 2.

“veyors of bread, purveyors of wine, purveyors of fish, pur-
 “veyors of butter and eggs, purveyors of confectionary, deli-
 “verers of greens, coffee-women, spicery-men, spicery-men’s
 “assistant-clerks, ewry-men, ewry-men’s assistant-clerks, kitch-
 “en-clerks comptrollers, kitchen-clerk-comptroller’s first clerks,
 “kitchen-clerk-comptroller’s junior clerks, yeomen of the
 “mouth, under yeomen of the mouth, grooms, grooms chil-
 “dred, pastry yeomen, harbingers, harbingers’ yeomen, keep-
 “ers of ice-houses, cart-takers, cart-taker’s grooms, bell-
 “ringers, cock and cryer, table-deckers, water-engine turn-
 “ers, cistern-cleaners, keeper of fire-buckers, and a thousand
 “or two more of the same kind, which if I were to set down,
 “I know not who would take the trouble of reading them
 “over. Will any man say, and keep his countenance, that
 “one, in one hundred of these hangers-on is of any real use?
 “Cannot our good king have a poached egg for his supper,
 “unless he keeps a purveyor of eggs, and his clerks, and his
 “clerks deputy-clerks, at an expence of five hundred pounds
 “a year, while the nation is sinking in a bottomless ocean of
 “debt? Again; who are they, the yeomen of the mouth,
 “and who are the under-yeomen of the mouth? What is their
 “business? What is it to yeomen a king’s mouth? What is
 “the necessity for a cofferer, where there is a treasurer? And,
 “where there is a cofferer, what occasion for a deputy-cofferer?
 “Why a necessary-house keeper? Cannot a king have a water-
 “closet, *and keep the key of it in his own pocket?* And my
 “little cock and cryer, what can be his post? Does he come
 “under the king’s chamber-window, and call the hour, mi-
 “micking the crowing of the cock? This might be of use be-
 “fore clocks and watches, especially repeaters, were invented;
 “but seems as superfluous now, as the deliverer of greens, the
 “coffee-women, spicery men’s assistant-clerks, the kitchen-
 “comptroller’s first clerks and junior clerks, the grooms’
 “children, the harbinger’s yeomen, &c. Does the maintain-
 “ing such a number of idlers suit the present state of our
 “finances? When will frugality be necessary, if not now?

“ Queen

“ Queen Anne gave an hundred thousand pounds a year to the public service. * We pay debts on the civil list of six hundred thousand pounds in one article, *without asking how there comes to be a deficiency.*” †

The following conversations, on the same subject, between the late Princess of Wales and Mr. Dodington, cannot fail to excite the attention and surprise of every reader. “ She,” the princess, “ said, that notwithstanding what I had mentioned of the king’s kindness to the children, and civility to her, *those things did not impose upon her*; that there were other things which she could not get over; she wished the king was less civil, and that he put less of *their* money into his own pocket; that he got full thirty thousand pounds *per annum*, by the poor prince’s death. If he would but have given them the duchy of Cornwall to have paid his debts, it would have been something. Should resentments be carried beyond the grave? Should the innocent suffer? Was it becoming so great a king to *leave his son’s debts unpaid*? and such considerable debts? I asked her what she thought they might amount to? She answered, she had endeavoured to know, as near as a person could properly enquire, who not having it in her power, could not pretend to pay them. She thought, that, to the tradesmen and servants, they did not amount to ninety thousand pounds; that there was some money owing to the Earl of Scarborough, and that there was abroad a debt of about seventy thousand pounds. That this hurt her exceedingly, though she did not shew it. I said that it was impossible to new-made people; the king could not now be altered, and that it added much to the prudence of her conduct, her taking no notice of it. She said, she could not, however, bear it, nor help sometimes giving the king to understand her, in the strongest and most disagreeable light. She had done it more than once, and she would tell me how

* The reader may be acquainted with the progress and termination of this act of royal munificence, by consulting anecdotes of the Earl of Chatham, quarto edition, vol. ii. page 50.

† Political Disquisitions, vol. ii. p. 128.

" it happened the last time. You know continued she, that
 " the crown has a power of resumption of Carleton house and
 " gardens for a certain sum. The king had, not long since,
 " an inclination to see them, and he came to make me a visit
 " there. We walked in the gardens, and he, seeming
 " mightily pleased with them, commended them much, and
 " told me that he was extremely glad I had got so very pretty
 " a place. I replied, it was a pretty place, but that the pretti-
 " ness of a place was an objection to it, when one was not
 " sure to keep it. The king said, that there was, indeed, a
 " power of resumption in the crown, for four thousand pounds,
 " but surely, I could not imagine that it could ever be made
 " use of against me! How could such a thought come into
 " my head? I answered no; it was not *that* which I was
 " afraid of, but I was afraid, *there were those who had a bet-
 " ter right to it, than either the crown or I.* He said, oh!
 " no, no, *I do not understand that; that cannot be.* I re-
 " plied, I did not pretend to understand those things, but I was
 " afraid, *there were such people.* He said, *Oh! I know
 " nothing of that. I do not understand it;* and immediately
 " *turned the discourse.* I was pleased with the ingenuity of
 " the attack, but could not help smiling at the defence, nor
 " she neither, when she told it." *

This princess was mother to the present king of England; and these debts of her husband, the Prince of Wales, are still unpaid. The English laws have declared, that *the king can do no wrong.* This maxim justifies George the Third for neglecting to pay the servants and tradesmen of his father. But if a private person had behaved in the same way, his conduct would have been regarded as the most shabby, dishonourable, ungrateful, and even dishonest, that can be imagined. The loss of these ninety thousand pounds must have injured, or perhaps ruined, a multitude of families, besides the seventy thousand pounds owing abroad, which may have reduced some very honest men to insolvency. At the same time the king of Eng-

* Dodington's Diary, p. 167.

land has the command of more ready cash than any man in Europe; and as if Europe itself, with all its repositories, were not sufficient to contain his wealth, he has lodged large sums in the public funds of North-America.

"We talked of the king's accumulation of treasure, which she reckoned at four millions. I told her, that what was become of it, how employed, where, and what was left, I did not pretend to guess; but that I computed the accumulation to be from twelve to fifteen millions. That these things, within a moderate degree, perhaps less than a fourth part, could be proved *beyond all possibility of a denial*; and, when the case should exist, would be published in controversial pamphlets." * One might suppose this accumulation to be incredible, but the affair admits of an easy solution. In 1756, Dr. Shebbeare published letters to the people of England. In the third letter, he says, that, "during wars carried on solely for Germanic interests, the English have spent in paying and sustaining those powers, *twenty-eight millions*, in hiring princes and people to defend their own territories, and protect their own properties.—Of this sum, *two millions, three hundred thousand pounds*, English money, has been paid to the Elector of Hanover, as subsidies for troops hired to defend their own country.—Since the blessed accession of this family to the throne of these realms, the Elector of Hanover must have been enabled to save, from his Germanic revenues, by not residing on the spot, at least *two hundred thousand pounds* annually. These sums, without entering into a strict calculation of increasing interest, like a Change Alley broker, and yet not rejecting it, must, without doubt, have doubled themselves to the amount of *sixteen millions, four hundred thousand pounds*." Dr. Shebbeare was sent to the pillory, but that does not affect the force of his facts. Besides all this money, and his salary as king, George the Second extracted from parliament many very large sums, to the extent of five hundred thousand pounds at once, as will be fully de-

* Dodington's Diary, p. 290.

tailed in another place. The assertion of Mr. Doddington is, in itself, extremely probable, and the authenticity of the Diary has been universally admitted. It is much to be lamented, that a government, formed, as Sir William Blackstone says, upon such *solid foundations*, was not able to hold America in absolute subjection. If the contents of this single chapter could have been published in that country, at the commencement of the late revolution, it is next to impossible that such a being as an American tory would have existed. The colonies did not seem to have known one hundredth part of the reasons which they really had for striving to break our parliamentary handcuffs.

In 1755, Mr. Pitt had a conference with the duke of Newcastle, which has been recorded by Mr. Doddington. A short specimen may serve to shew how the British nation has been bubbled by government. "The duke *mumbled* that the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies were offered and *pressed*; but there was nothing done in them; that the Hessian was perfected, but the Russian was not concluded. Whether the duke meant unsigned, or unratified, we cannot tell, but we understand it is signed. When his grace dwelt so much upon the king's *honour*, Mr. Pitt asked him, what, if out of the *FIFTEEN MILLIONS which the king had saved*, he should give his kinsman of Hesse one hundred thousand pounds, and the Czarina, one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, to be off from these bad bargains, and not suffer the suggestions so dangerous to his own quiet, and the safety of his family, to be thrown out, which would, and must be, insisted upon in a debate of this nature? Where would be the harm of it? The duke had nothing to say, but desired they might talk it over again with the chancellor. Mr. Pitt replied, he was at their command, though *nothing could alter his opinion*." Much has been said about the integrity of Mr. Pitt. It was the extremity of baseness in him and others, to keep such a secret. This man has been very lucky, in gaining a popular

* Doddington's Diary, page 373.

character.

character. We admire his *integrity*, and the Americans, even at this day, revere his generous exertions in their behalf. He declared loudly, in parliament, that he would not suffer the colonies to *manufacture a hob-nail for a horse-shoe*.

The reader will here observe, that thirty-seven years have elapsed since George the second had saved FIFTEEN MILLIONS from the civil list. It has been said above, that a sum at five *per cent.* of compound interest, doubles itself in fourteen years and an hundred and five days. Now, at this rate, these fifteen millions would, in thirty-seven years, have multiplied to more than ninety-one millions and an half. It is indeed true, as Mr. Dodington says, that we cannot tell *what has become of it*, or *how it has been employed*, but we know that none of the money has been applied to the service of the nation. We have since paid several large arrears into which the civil list had fallen, and an hundred thousand pounds *per annum*, have been added to the royal salary. At the same time, the nation has been borrowing money to pay that salary, the expences of Gibraltar and Canada, for the support of the war-system, and other matters, nominally at three or four *per cent.* but in reality, sometimes at five and an half *per cent.* To these fifteen millions, we may safely add a million for the expences of collecting it from the people; and let us again revert to the principle, that a sum taken from their purses, brings a real loss of ten *per cent.* At this rate of compound interest, the sixteen millions would double themselves once in seven years and fifty-three days, or five times in thirty-seven years and nine months. By this royal manœuvre, the public hath lost five hundred and twelve millions sterling. These sixteen millions, if left in our pockets, would have made the national debt as light as a feather, and all our taxes, a trifling burden. Great part of the money, if not the whole, was sent to Hanover, and thus utterly lost to Britain.

The princess dowager of Wales, mother to George the Third, once observed to Mr. Dodington, that "She wished
"Hanover in the sea, as the cause of all our misfortunes."

Since

Since the year 1714, Britain has been dragged after that electorate, like a man of war in the tow of a bum-boat. Hence the royal accumulation of fifteen millions sterling; and "hence it follows of necessity, that vast numbers of our people are compelled to seek their livelihood by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, flattering, sutoring, forswearing, forging, gaming, lying, fawning, hectoring, voting, scribbling, star-gazing, poisoning, whoring, canting, libelling, free-thinking, and the like occupations."*

The sum above stated, might have been employed in clearing, and planting the waste lands of Britain and Ireland. In Hampshire, there is a tract of land, about ten or twelve miles square, all in one body, that still lies in a state of nature. Salisbury plains are covered with deer-parks. In an extent of about sixteen miles long, and five miles broad, we meet with five lodges, where the deer throng in crouds, and are regularly fed. These particulars are inserted on the authority of a respectable gentleman, well acquainted with that part of England. Other examples of the same sort might be given, even in England, though that is by far the most populous and best cultivated part of the three kingdoms. Many large tracts are still suffered to lie in *commons*, that is, in natural grass, which

* Gulliver's Travels, part iv.

To this enumeration may be added *franking*. In 1763, the amount of franked letters was, one hundred and seventy thousand, seven hundred pounds. Blackstone's Commentaries, book i. chap. 8. At that time, the two houses of parliament contained, perhaps, seven hundred and fifty members, for English peers were less numerous than they are now. At a medium, this sum was equal to an annuity of two hundred and twenty-seven pounds, twelve shillings sterling, for each member. Some commoners paid the wages of their footmen with franks, at half a crown per dozen. About sixteen years ago, Sir Robert Herries, a banker in London, obtained a seat as member for the five Scots boroughs, included in the district of Dumfries. His object was said to be, the saving of postage on all letters directed to his office. This was computed at seven hundred pounds sterling a year. Mr. Pitt has made some very proper regulations on this head. He was warmly opposed by Edmund Burke.

In the Hebrides, four places excepted, no post-office is established. "A letter from Skye to Lewis, the direct distance but a few leagues, if sent by post, must travel about twelve hundred miles, before it can reach the place of its destination." Dr. Anderson's Introduction, p. 28. One is at a loss to conceive, on what account the Scots, during the American war, assumed, in general, such a rancorous antipathy to the cause of the United States. Their zeal for the English government was violent; yet as justly might an ox feel attachment to the farmer who fattens him for the market.

would

would produce ten times their present value of crops, if properly ploughed and manured. As to Scotland and Ireland, seven-eighths of the soil is at this moment in a state of nature, not the smallest attempt having ever been made for its improvement. Six miles below Dumfries, and about a mile from a seat of lord Stormont's, there is an extent of four or five miles square, sometimes covered by the tide, which has broke in upon it within the last fifty years. It is surrounded on two sides by dry land, and could be easily recovered from Solway Frith. The fleece is now carried off in large quantities for manure. At the same time we are fighting for islands in the West-Indies, like the dog in the fable, who dropped the *substance*, while snapping at the *shadow*. Besides Salisbury plains, there are numerous deer-parks. At Goodwood, in Suffex, the duke of Richmond has a park for game four miles round. The dog-kennel cost ten thousand pounds. There are twenty game-keepers. Before the revolution in France, above a thousand partridge eggs were brought every year, from that country. The importation is now stopt. At present, his grace keeps only forty pair of hounds at Goodwood. Some years ago, it was mentioned in the newspapers, that the duke of Bedford, for the purpose of hunting, had purchased, and brought over from France, some hundreds of live foxes. He is, at this time, building at Wooburn, a dog-kennel; the expence of which is computed at *seventy thousand pounds sterling*. If England contains only an hundred such parks as that of Goodwood, an hundred square miles of land are lost to the public. Like the rocks at fort William, and the wilds of Aberdeenshire, every foot of this land might be converted into gardens and corn-fields. If we assign an hundred and sixty people to every square mile, which is less than the reputed population of Switzerland, we have an extrusion of sixteen thousand persons from subsistence, for the sake of hares, foxes and partridges. But this is not all. The duke of Richmond keeps twenty game-keepers, and forty pair of hounds. His dog-kennel is totally eclipsed by that of Wooburn; and hence we may reasonably

would

sonably presume, that the hounds and game-keepers of the duke of Bedford, are still more numerous. But let us once more take the duke of Richmond for a standard, and say, that the whole kingdom of England contains only an hundred times more than his private hunting establishment. We have then two thousand game-keepers, and four thousand pair of hounds to raise the price of provisions. This is a great deal; and yet, it is more likely that the country maintains twenty thousand pair of hounds than four thousand. The loss of one hundred square miles of land, and the burden of such a multitude of useless men and dogs, call loudly for the final destruction of every deer park in Britain. On the 4th of February, 1791, a petition was presented to the house of commons from Aulsecker, for a tax upon dogs. The petition states, that "where many dogs are kept, and packs of hounds, by gentlemen, the prices of many articles of life are so much encreased (particularly sheeps' heads, and other inferior pieces of butcher's meat, which formerly made an essential part of the maintenance of the poor), as to be vastly *beyond their reach*; and are now sold only for the kennels of their opulent neighbours."* The master of a dog-kennel, who supports it by starving the poor, as completely deserves the gallows as a horse-stealer, or a highway-man. In Scotland also, landholders can be pointed out, who squander considerable portions of wholesome food upon their four-footed vermin. These facts shew the prodigious waste of land and people, in consequence of the present tyrannical system of game laws. Even to the cultivated parts of England, great damage is frequently done in the course of a fox-chase. If, to these considerations, we add the many thousands of horses that are kept by the rich for hunting, racing, and other trifling amusements, it will turn out that some hundred thousands of additional people could be maintained by the food cast away upon superfluous quadrupeds. Some writers have dreamed that Britain is overstocked with people. In fact, this island could, with Chinese management,

* Senator, vol. i. p. 266.

readily

readily support quadruple its present number of inhabitants. The same remark applies to almost every other part of Europe, Holland and Switzerland excepted. While so many millions of British acres lie uncultivated, we pay six or seven hundred thousand pounds a year to the family of a single man. At a round calculation, let us guess, that fifty pounds sterling are sufficient for converting an acre of barren bogs, or moors, into meadows or corn-fields. The sum of six hundred and sixty thousand pounds, paid in 1785, to the immediate use of the crown, might thus have fertilized an hundred and twelve thousand acres.

The most miserable part of the story still remains to be told; but the particulars must be deferred to some future time. The civil list is a gulf yawning to absorb the whole property of the British empire. We look back without satisfaction, and forward without hope.

Lord Chesterfield informs us, that George the First was exceedingly hurt, even by the weak opposition which he met with in parliament, on account of subsidies. He complained to his most intimate friends, that he had come over to England to be a *begging king*. His vexation was, that he could not command money without the farce of asking it; for, in his reign, as at present, the debates of parliament were but a farce. Such were the liberal sentiments of the first sovereign of the protestant succession.

This king detested his son, George the Second, as an offspring of illicit love. His jealousy was fatal to the life of Count Koningmarck, a Swedish nobleman. On the same account, his wife, the heiress to the duchy of Zell, died in prison, after a confinement of thirty-six years. George the First should have considered this accident, if real, as a *renovation*, rather than a *corruption*, of the royal blood. For tradition reports, that *his own* mother, the princess Sophia, bore a resemblance to Elizabeth, maiden queen of England. Like that illustrious and admired sovereign, Sophia, by the formidable

dable number of her male favourites, attested the ardor of her sensibility, and the robustness of her constitution.

The quarrel between George the second, and his son Frederick, prince of Wales, father to George the third, arose from a different cause. It lasted for more than twenty years, and will be explained in my succeeding history of the reign of George the second. It was carried to a dreadful height. When old queen Caroline was dying, Frederick requested permission to see her. His mother refused access to her son, and expired without an interview. Fifteen years after, Frederick himself died, and Dodington has obliged us with some anecdotes of his burial. By these we learn, that George grudged a dinner to the courtiers who attended it. The following is part of the account which Dodington gives of this affair.

“ At seven o'clock, I went, according to the order, to the house of lords. The many slights that the poor remains of a much loved friend and master had met with, and who was now preparing the last trouble he could give his enemies, sunk me so low, that for the first hour, I was incapable of making any observation.

“ The procession began, and (except the lords appointed to hold the pall, and attend the chief mourner, and those of his own domestics) when the attendants were called in their ranks there was not one English lord, not one bishop, and only one Irish lord, two sons of dukes, one baron's son, and two privy counsellors,” (of whom the author was *one*) “ out of these great bodies, to make a show of duty to a prince so great in rank and expectation. While we were in the house of lords, it rained very hard, as it had done *all the season*: when we came into Palace-Yard, the way to the Abbey was lined with soldiers, but the managers had not afforded the smallest covering over our heads; but by good fortune, while we were from under cover, it held up. We went in at the south-east door, and turned short into Henry the seventh's chapel. The service was performed without either anthem or organ. So ended this sad day.—There was not the attention

tion to order the green-cloth to provide them a bit of bread, and these gentlemen," (the bed-chamber of the late prince,) of the first rank and distinction, in discharging of their last sad duty to a loved and loving master, were forced to be-
 "speak a great cold dinner from a common tavern in the neighbourhood. At three o'clock, indeed, they vouchsafed to think of a dinner, and ordered one; but *the disgrace was complete*. The tavern-dinner was paid for, and given to the poor. N. B. The duke of Somerset was chief mourner, notwithstanding the flourishing state of the royal family. *"

Judge Page, of *hanging* memory, when once pronouncing sentence of death upon a prisoner, added, by way of consolation, "You have A PITIFUL KING firrah! A PITIFUL KING, INDEED!"

In this chapter we have seen a few memorable specimens of the mode in which public money is expended. We shall conclude with some remarks on the method by which it is raised.

"The rigour and *arbitrary* proceedings of excise laws, seem hardly compatible with the temper of a free nation. For the frauds that might be committed in this branch of the revenue, unless a strict watch is kept, make it necessary, wherever it is established, to give the officers a power of entering and searching the houses of such as deal in exciseable commodities, at any hour of the day; and, in many cases, of the night likewise. And the proceedings, in case of transgressions, are so summary and sudden, that a man may be convicted in two days time in the penalty of many thousand pounds, by two commissioners or justices of the peace; to the total exclusion of *the trial by jury*, and disregard of *the common law*." About seven million sterling, or two-fifths of the whole annual revenues of Britain, are raised by an excise. They are raised in an *arbitrary* manner, and in "disregard of *the common law*." After such an acknowledgement, it seems trifling in this author to cant so much about English liberty. He says, that "from

* Dodington's Diary, Dublin edition. p. 72.

† Commentaries by Sir William Blackstone, book 1. chap. 8.

“ its first original to the present time, its very name (*excise*) “ has been odious to the people of England.” If this be true, and if the people are as free as they pretend to be, they might, surely, in the course of an hundred and forty-nine years,* have cast it aside, and placed a better system in its stead. The writer gives a very long catalogue of commodities that have been excised, and adds these words: “ A list which no friend to his “ country would wish to see farther encreased.” Since his time, the list has been much enlarged. Excise has always been paid, and always execrated; which shews the folly of the trite aphorism, that an Englishman can only be taxed by *his own consent*, and tried by *a jury of his peers*. As two justices of the peace can supersede the existence of *the common law*, and the right of *trial by jury*, let us enquire what kind of persons they are. In Scotland, we all know, that they are sometimes the most insolent, the most brutal, unintelligent and worthless characters in the county where they reside. The chief qualifications required by the statute of the fifth year of George the second is, that they shall have an hundred pounds per annum clear of all deductions. Blackstone speaks of this affair in the following terms: “ Few care to undertake, and fewer *understand* the office. “ The country is *greatly obliged* to any worthy magistrate, that, “ without sinister views of his own, will engage in this troublesome service.” (Thus we must commence mendicants for people to suspend *the common law*.) “ And therefore, if *a well “ meaning justice* makes any *undesigned slip* in his practice, “ great lenity and indulgence are shewn him in the courts of law; “ and there are many statutes made to protect him in the *up- “ right* discharge of his office; which, among other privileges, “ prohibit such justices from being sued for any *OVERSIGHT*, “ *without notice before hand*; and stop all suits begun, on *ten- “ der made of sufficient amends*.”† Who is to decide what compensation should be satisfactory? This quotation, when stripped of the verbage that surrounds it, tell us plainly, that jus-

* Excise was first imposed in England, in 1643.

† Commentaries, book i. chap. 9.

tices of the peace are very often incapable of executing their duty, and that *many statutes* have been expressly framed, to shield them from the punishment deserved by their ignorance. A magistrate who understands his business needs no peculiar protection. In short, we see, that when a justice of the peace blunders, the door against redress is both shut and bolted. The author, indeed, subjoins, that a justice, when convicted of *wilful or malicious injury*, is subjected "to double costs." But since it is next to impossible to convict or even to prosecute him, the latter stipulation is a mere stalking horse. These magistrates are removeable at the pleasure of the crown; a reason, perhaps, why they have been chosen as instruments for suspending the use of *the common law*.

The morals of the British nation have been degraded by excessive taxes. On the 16th of June, 1789, the house of commons resolved itself into a committee, on the bill for an excise on tobacco. A few notes from Debrett's parliamentary debates on that bill, will demonstrate the maturity to which smuggling and its twin-sister perjury, must have extended. Mr. Pitt said, "that at least one-half of the tobacco, consumed in the kingdom (Britain) was *smuggled*." The importation of tobacco "amounted to nearly sixteen millions of pounds, but to fourteen *at least*." The actual legal importation, he declared, "had been, on the average, estimated at *seven millions*." The duty on each million of pounds, was sixty thousand pounds sterling; so that if only five millions of pounds were annually smuggled into Britain, the revenue was defrauded of three hundred thousand pounds sterling, and *the fair trader*, if such a character can have existed, was robbed of his customers and his profits. Mr. Pitt said, that previous to the commutation act, which reduced the duty on tea, about the same quantity of that article had been imported, and a very great proportion of it had been smuggled. He had made some regulations for lessening the duty on wines imported, and from thirteen thousand tons, the former visible importation, it had mounted up to twenty-two thousand tons. The additional nine thousand had formerly been

smuggled. It is no wonder that a *custom-house oath* has long been synonymous to perjury. The tobacco bill, consisting of an hundred and thirty-five folio pages, past, after long and angry debates. Next year an attempt was made to repeal it, and on the 16th of April, 1790, Mr. Sheridan, in a speech on that question, told the following story to the house of commons. An eminent distiller, of a very fair character, had occasion to dispute a judgment by which a quantity of spirits had been seized and condemned as above proof. He maintained that they were not above proof; that Clark's hydrometer, by which they had been proved, was faulty; and that if the spirits were tried by hydrometers accurately made, they would be found to be such as the law required them to be, and consequently not seizable. The case went to trial, and turned out precisely as the distiller had stated it to be; Mr. Clarke admitted that his hydrometer was faulty, and requested that the commissioners of excise would give him leave to amend and correct it. But instead of listening to a request so reasonable and just, they procured a clause to be inserted in a hotch-potch bill, by which it was enacted that Clark's hydrometer should, in future, be the legal standard for trying the strength of spirits.

This hydrometer was acknowledged by its maker to be faulty; and yet the commissioners, so far from granting him leave to amend it, applied to parliament for an act which sanctioned error, and legalized falsehood and oppression.* Thus far Mr. Sheridan.

* Dehrett's Parliamentary Debates, vol. xxvii. page 408.

CHAPTER VI.

Edward I.—Edward III.—Henry V.—Ireland—Conduct of Britain in various quarters of the world—Otaheite—Guinea—North-America—The Jersey prison-ship—Bengal—General estimate of destruction in the East-Indies.

AT home Englishmen admire liberty, but abroad they have always been harsh masters. Edward the First conquered Wales and Scotland, and, at the distance of five hundred years, his name is yet remembered in both countries with traditionary horror. His annals are blasted by an excess of infamy, uncommon even in the Russian catalogue of English kings. David Hume, Sir William Blackstone, and Sir John Sinclair, have celebrated the talents and achievements of this detestable barbarian. "The English *Justinian* was one of the wisest and most fortunate princes, that ever sat upon the throne of England. In him were united, the prudence and foresight of the statesman and legislator, with the valour and magnanimous spirit of the hero."* Edward made war in Palestine and in France. He butchered some hundred thousands of the Welsh and the Scots. He was constantly at variance with his own subjects, and exerted every petty fraud to strip them of their property. The spoil thus obtained, was expended with equal criminality. We shudder to think of a domestic murder; but when a crowned robber, whose understanding is perhaps unequal to the office of a post-boy, sends an hundred thousand brave men into the field, to desolate provinces, and hew nations down like oxen, we call it *Glory*. Thus common sense and humanity are obliterated by a rhapsody of words. If Edward the first, as a private man, had murdered a single Scot or Welshman, the world would have agreed in thinking that he deserved

* History of the public revenue Part I. chap. 6.

the gallows. But when he *only*, upon the most hateful pretences, butchered three or four hundred thousand people, we are summoned, at the end of five centuries, to admire "his wisdom, his good fortune, his valour and magnanimity." As to his *wisdom*, it is hard to say what England gained by his victories. The Welsh were independent, or thereabouts, in the reign of Henry the Fourth, an hundred years after the death of Edward, so that the *merit* of finally subduing them is to be placed somewhere else. The Scots revolted in the lifetime of this Edward. He died on a journey to Scotland, for the sacred purpose of extirpating the Scots nation. He would have been much wiser if he had staid at home at first, and saved himself the trouble of an impracticable conquest. As to the domestic legislation of this *Justinian*, he hanged two hundred and eighty Jews in one day. "Above fifteen thousand were plundered of all their wealth, and banished the kingdom."* The same writer says, that these enormities were committed under various *pretences*. "The year thirteen hundred forms the disgraceful epoch of the original debasement of our standard coin, when our *English Justinian*, Edward First, defrauded every creditor of eight-pence halfpenny in every twenty shillings."† An excellent legislator he was, to be sure, when he cheated the public creditors, and forged bad money. Edward First introduced tonnage and poundage, duties on imports and exports. He was, in every respect, a scourge to the human race.

Edward the Second wanted to live at peace. Sir John Sinclair tells us, that his reign is remarkable for "the *inconsiderable* taxes levied." He was fond of the society of some companions, and all the historians mention this mark of good nature, as a very gross weakness, if not a *positive crime*. The heart of a wolf was, at that time, an essential qualification for a king of England. After various rebellions against him, Edward was taken prisoner by his wife. He expired in Berkley

* History of the public revenue, Part I. chap. 6.

† Estimate, &c. by Mr. Chalmers, p. 80.

castle, by a species of death too horrible to be described. His real guilt was a social and peaceable disposition.

"The reign of Edward the Third is, without doubt, the most splendid in the English history.—His queen pawned her jewels."* The king pawned *his crown*; and this pledge lay unredeemed for eight years. He conquered a great part of France, without any sort of justice on his side. The rapacity of his son, the BLACK prince, as he has been emphatically termed, drove the French into rebellion, and the English out of the country. This conquest, and subsequent expulsion, first planted the seeds of that brutal antipathy to the French people, by which England has been too much distinguished.

Ferox Britannus viribus antebac,
Gallique semper cladibus imminens.

BUCHANAN.

"The Briton, formerly ferocious in his strength, and always menacing calamities to France." Englishmen pretend to be proud of the horrid ravages committed in that country, by Edward the third, by his son, and by Henry the fifth. The justice of their claims has long been given up; and yet we are deafened about their *virtues*. Englishmen prattle on French perfidy, and of sucking in, with their mother's milk, an honest hatred for that greatest of nations. In the French wars of Edward the third, and Henry the fifth, England was plainly the aggressor; and the country, so far from feeling pride in their victories, ought, if possible, to suppress that part of its ancient history. Phillip de Comines places the affair in a proper light. He ascribes the civil wars of York and Lancaster, that succeeded the death of Henry the fifth, to the indignation of divine justice. The murder, by Richard the third, of his two nephews, was a diminutive crime, contrasted with the atrocity of Crecy, of Azincourt, and Poitiers. Henry the fifth was a two-fold usurper. "When he thought," says Horace Walpole, "that he had any title to the crown of

* History of the Public Revenue, Part I. chap. 6.

"*England*, the other followed of course." Since his time the kings of England have called themselves *kings of France*, just like a person advertising that his grand-father had stolen a horse.

Henry butchered numbers of the Lollards, a premature tribe of protestants. The Scots, in great bodies, joined the French, and gave him some checks. On this he pretended, that they were *his* lawful subjects, and hanged those whom he took prisoners, for having rebelled. Mr. Hume has employed a long paragraph upon the *character* of Henry. He begins, by saying, that "this prince possessed *many eminent virtues*." Henry committed more mischief than all the felons ever executed at Tyburn. Yet Mr. Hume draws a plausible picture of him, and fixes a strong impression of respect and kindness. Historians abound with these sophistical portraits. The reader is taught to admire, when there is room for nothing but execration. Thus are his morals corrupted, and his understanding turned topsy-turvy. This is the most usual effect of perusing history. If Henry had only put to death a single Lollard, he certainly could not possess *many eminent virtues*. A mite in a crust of cheese, projecting an orrery, would be a less extravagant idea than that of a human being defining the nature, essence, and intentions of the Deity. But, when this phrenzy breaks out into personal violence, as in the case of the Lollards, and the quakers at Coventry, the madness of the scheme is forgot in its extreme wickedness. *

Ireland has long presented a striking monument of the wisdom, justice, and humanity of the English nation. That devoted island was, in the end of the twelfth century, over-run by a set of banditti, under Henry the second. This established a divine right. Sir John Davis informs us, that even in times of peace, it was adjudged no felony to kill a *mere Irishman*. This acquisition proved very troublesome to the conquerors.

* The English nation might, at this day, have been four times more numerous, a thousand times more happy, and by millions of degrees less criminal, if two thirds of them had belonged to the society of Friends.

"The usual revenue of Ireland," says Mr. Hume, "amount-
 "ed only to six thousand pounds a year. The queen (Eliza-
 "beth,) though with much repining, commonly added twenty
 "thousand pounds more, which she remitted from England."
 The *supremacy* was at best a losing bargain. In war, affairs
 were, of course, an hundred times worse. Sir John Sinclair
 says, that the rebellion of Tyrone, which lasted for eight years
 cost four hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. In 1599, six
 hundred thousand pounds were spent in six months; and Sir
 Robert Cecil affirmed, that in ten years, Ireland cost England
 three millions, and four hundred thousand pounds sterling.
 This profusion of treasure was expended in supporting the pi-
 ratrical conquest of a country, which did not yield a shilling of
 profit to England, nor pay, even in time of peace, a fourth
 part of the expence of its government. The consolation of in-
 flicting the deepest and most universal wretchedness, was the
 total recompense afforded to the good people of England. Sir
 William Petty, in his *Political Anatomy*, says, that in the year
 1641, Ireland contained 1,466,000 inhabitants.
 He adds, that in 1652, they had sunk to 850 000†

Decrease 616,000

Thus, in eleven years, the Irish nation lost six hundred and
 sixteen thousand people. In 1641, they had been driven into
 rebellion, by the tyranny of that English parliament which
 conducted Charles Stuart to the scaffold. On the incorruptible
 virtues of that upright band, much nonsense hath been said and
 sung. By a single vote, they confiscated two millions and five
 hundred thousand acres of ground in Ireland. The whole
 island was transformed into an immense slaughter-house. Ire-
 land, governed by an English *republic* might have looked to-
 wards Morocco, as a terrestrial paradise. Compared with the
 tremendous mass of misery produced by Strafford, Cromwell,
 Ireton, and the *virtuous* duke of Ormond, the dungeons of

* These particulars are borrowed from a quarto edition of Guthrie's *Grammar*,
 printed at Dublin. I have not yet seen a copy of the *Political Anatomy*.

the

the Bastile, or the proscriptions of a Roman triumvirate, shrink into forgetfulness.*

Neither the restoration of Charles the second, nor the *glorious* revolution, afforded much relief to Ireland. The people continued to groan under the most oppressive and absurd despotism, till, in defiance of all consequences, the immortal Swift, like another Ajax,

Broke the dark phalanx, and let in the light.

He taught his country to understand her importance. At last she resolved to assert it, and, as a necessary arrangement, she arose in arms. England saw the hazard of contending with a brave, an injured, and an indignant nation. The fabric of tyranny trembled to its base; and it is to be hoped, that a short time will extinguish every vestige of a supremacy, dishonourable and pernicious to both nations. As matters now stand, an Irishman, who loves his country, must be strongly tempted to wish that England were sunk five thousand fathoms below the German ocean. If the rest of Europe has not been reduced to the same distress with Ireland, it is owing to want of power, and not of inclination, on the side of England. The greater part of her wars, commenced against foreign nations, have wanted even a pretence of justice. For instance, in 1652, the immaculate English commonwealth forced the Dutch into a rupture. Mr Hume assigns the following reasons for it. "Many of the members thought that a foreign war would serve as a pretence for *continuing the same parliament*, and "delaying the new model of a representative, with which "the nation had so long been flattered. To divert the attention of the public from domestic quarrels, towards foreign "transactions, seemed, in the present dispositions of men's "minds, to be *good policy*. The parliamentary leaders hoped "to gain many rich prizes from the Dutch, and to distress "and sink their flourishing commerce." The Romans began

* Consult a Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland, by Dr. Curry. An epitome of his valuable book will form a future part of the Political Progress.

the third Punic war for the very same kind of reasons. Blake was the hero of this contest; and it has been customary to celebrate his virtues. He had exactly the same proportion of honesty with any other admiral of Corsairs. Plunder and bloodshed were the object of his masters; and if it be true, that he despised money, this only shews that he was willing to rob and murder without any farther gratification than that which he felt from the pleasure of the performance. The Dutch did all that was possible to prevent the war, both before and after a first battle had been fought. The English behaved with the most intolerable arrogance. This also is an *admitted fact*; so that the whole guilt of the quarrel rested on the side of England, even by the statement of British historians. Eight bloody and desperate conflicts were fought. One of them lasted for two days, and a second for three. Many thousands of lives were lost. Sixteen hundred merchant vessels were taken from the Dutch, and their fisheries were totally suspended. The war lasted for about two years.

Visit the royal infirmary of Edinburgh, and, along with a dozen students, who are half smothering a laugh at the agonies of the patient, contemplate the amputation or the fracture of a limb. You may then attempt to form a conception of three hundred thousand such operations, and reflect that *this is war*.

In 1655, Cromwell attacked the dominions of Spain, without pretending to have received any offence. The two nations had lived in profound peace for about thirty years. "Several sea officers," says Mr. Hume, "having entertained scruples of conscience, with regard to *the justice of the Spanish war*, threw up their commissions, and retired. No commands, they thought, of their superiors, could justify a war, which was contrary to the principles of *natural equity*, and which the civil magistrate *had no right to order*." The names of these officers ought to be transmitted to posterity on brass and marble. "Individuals, they maintained, in resigning to the public their natural liberty, could bestow on it only what they themselves were possessed of, *a right of perform-*
ing

" *ing lawful actions*, and could invest it with no authority of
 " *commanding what is contrary to the decrees of heaven.*"
 All this is most unquestionably true, but observe how Mr.
 Hume gets over this difficulty. " Such maxims, though THEY
 " SEEM REASONABLE, are perhaps too perfect for human
 " nature; and must be regarded as one effect, though of the
 " most *innocent* and even *honourable* kind, of that spirit, partly
 " *fanatical*, partly republican, which predominated in Eng-
 " land." Thus, when a man refuses, at command of govern-
 ment, to commit what he thinks murder and piracy, he is
 partly *fanatical*, and his scruples, though *they seem reasonable*,
 are perhaps *too perfect for human nature*. A book that dictates
 such maxims of depravity is more pestiferous to the human
 heart than the sophisms of Hobbs and Machiavel, or the impu-
 rities of Rochester and of Cleland. Let us proceed with our
 narrative. In the West-Indies, Penn, father to the founder
 of Philadelphia, and Venables conquered Jamaica; and the
 crown of Britain continues to hold that Island by the same
 right which a highwayman has to the watch in your pocket.
 A fleet of Spanish galleons were attacked. Two of them were
 taken, and the plunder was valued at two millions of pieces
 of eight. Two other galleons were set on fire. The wife and
 daughter of the viceroy of Peru were destroyed in the flames,
 while the distracted husband and father, who might have
 escaped death, chose to perish with his family.* " The next
 " action against the Spaniards was more *honourable*, though
 " less *profitable*, to the nation." Thus we learn from Mr.
 Hume, that there is a degree of *honour* in burning ships, when
 you cannot get them plundered, and in destroying innocent
 passengers, with their wives and children. This *next action*,
 which was so extremely *honourable*, consisted in the conflagra-
 tion of sixteen Spanish ships, with all their treasures. " This
 " was the *last* and *greatest* action of the gallant Blake. Dis-
 " interested, generous, liberal; ambitious only of *true* glory,

* He preferred death to a capitulation with tyrants.

" dreadful

" dreadful only to his avowed enemies, he forms one of the
 " most *perfect* characters of the age, and the least stained with
 " those errors and violences, which were then so predominant.
 " The protector ordered him a pompous funeral at the public
 " charge; but the tears of his countrymen were the most ho-
 " nourable panegyric on his memory." Mr. Hume should
 likewise have told us, that Charles the second, caused Blake to
 be *dug up again*. He himself admits, that the invasion of the
 Spanish West-Indies " was an *unwarrantable* violation of
 " treaty." Where, then, is the distinction between Crom-
 well and Barbarossa? There is, surely, none at all. England
 paid dearly for this war. The property of her merchants in
 Spain was confiscated to an immense amount; and it was
 computed that fifteen hundred English vessels were, in a few
 years, captured by the enemy. These losses counterbalanced
 the *millions of pieces of eight*, acquired by the perpetration of
 such horrid crimes.

On the 22d of February, 1665, Charles the second declared
 war against Holland. When an exile and a beggar, he had
 been received with kindness in that country; and the general
 partiality of the people in his favour, had afforded some offence
 to the late republic of England. His majesty now hastened to
 discharge his obligations. The motives to this rupture, cor-
 responded with those which led to the former war with Hol-
 land, *viz.* the love of pillage and of slaughter. " The Dutch,
 " who, by industry and frugality, were enabled to undersell
 " them (the English) in every market, retained possession of
 " the most lucrative branches of commerce; and the English
 " merchants had the mortification to find, that all attempts to
 " extend their trade, were still turned, by the vigilance of
 " their rivals, to their loss and dishonour. Their indignation
 " increased, when they considered the *superior naval power* of
 " England; the bravery of her officers and seamen; her fa-
 " vourable situation which enabled her to intercept the whole
 " Dutch commerce. By the prospect of these advantages,
 " they were strongly prompted from motives *less just than po-*
 " *litical*

" *litical*, to make war upon the states ; and, at once, to *ra-*
 " *visb from them, by force*, what they could not obtain, or
 " could obtain but slowly, by superior skill and industry." In
 this passage Mr. Hume implies, that England acted with some
 degree both of *policy* and of *justice*. As to the latter, it is evi-
 dent, from his own account, that there was not a single spark
 of it, and as to the *policy*, the sequel shewed, that it was en-
 tirely mistaken. The English minister at the Hague, presented
 to the states " a list of those depredations, of which the English
 " complained. It is remarkable, that all the pretended de-
 " predations preceded the year 1662, when a treaty of league
 " and alliance had been renewed with the Dutch, and these
 " complaints were then thought either so *ill-grounded* or so
 " *frivolous*, that they had not been mentioned in the treaty."
 Two ships had been claimed by the English. The matter was
 referred to a court of law ; and the states had consigned a sum
 of money, in case the question should be decided against them.
 The matter was still in dependence. The states had offered
 thirty thousand pounds to the owners of one of these two ships,
 in full of their demands, and the people had resolved to accept
 of it. They were prevented by the English ambassador, who
 told them, that the claim was a *matter of state*. The whole
 English nation were violently bent on a war. " The parlia-
 " ment granted a supply, the largest, by far, that had ever
 " been given to a king of England ; yet *scarcely sufficient for*
 " *the present undertaking*." The Dutch " tried every art of
 " negotiation, before *they would come to extremities*." The
 war began. The king of Denmark made, at the same time,
 an offensive alliance with England against Holland, and ano-
 ther with Holland against England. He adhered to the treaty
 with Holland, and seized and confiscated all the English ships
 in his harbours. England could not obtain a single ally, except
 the insignificant bishop of Munster. One of the naval battles
 in this war lasted for four days, and the fleets were finally part-
 ed by a mist. In a subsequent engagement, the English were
 victorious, and burnt in the road of Vlie, an hundred and
 forty

forty merchantmen, with a large village on the neighbouring coast. The Dutch in return, sailed up the river Medway, took Sheerness, destroyed a number of men of war, insulted Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Harwich, and sailed up the Thames as far as Tilbury. On the 10th of July, 1667, a peace was concluded upon equal terms. The war cost the Dutch about three millions sterling, but they were not vanquished. On the 13th of January, 1668, Charles entered into a strict alliance with them. Not long after it was signed, Clifford, a confidential minister of Charles, said *we must have a second war with Holland*. On the 17th of March, 1672, war was actually declared by Charles against that republic. "A ground of quarrel," says Mr. Hume, "was fought by means of a yacht, dispatched for Lady Temple. The captain sailed through the Dutch fleet, which lay on their own coasts; and he had orders to make them strike, to fire on them, and to persevere till *they should return his fire*." The Dutch admiral came on board of the yacht, and in friendly and sensible terms, represented the absurdity of such conduct. The captain of the yacht did not chuse to continue his fire; and, for this breach of orders, he was, on his return home, committed to the Tower. Some other pretences are enumerated by Mr. Hume, and they were all equally ridiculous. A series of dreadful engagements were again fought at sea; and it does not appear that England gained a single victory. But as France now assisted Charles, the Dutch were overwhelmed rather than vanquished. A peace was signed in February 1674, and the advantages gained by England were extremely trifling.

These three wars with Holland, and the fourth with Spain, were begun and ended in the short period of twenty-two years. No sober man will attempt to deny that, in every one of them, England was an unprovoked, a perfidious, and a barbarous aggressor; and that she discovered in each of them, an insatiable thirst of piracy and murder. Her conduct both before and since that period hath been exactly of the same complexion; nor is it likely that she will forbear to insult and rob other nations,

tions, till, in the maturity of divine justice, a second Duke of Normandy, shall extinguish her political existence.

In the East and West-Indies, the conduct of the "United Kingdoms" may be candidly compared with the *trial* of Atahualpa.

Our sublime politicians exult in the victory of Seringapatam,* and the butchery of the subjects of a prince, at the distance of six thousand leagues from Britain. Yet it would be an event the most auspicious both for Bengal and for ourselves, if Cornwallis, with all his myrmidons, could be at once driven out of India.

But what quarter of the globe has not been convulsed by our ambition, our avarice, and our baseness? The tribes of the Pacific Ocean are polluted by the most loathsome of diseases. On the shores of Africa, we bribe whole nations by drunkenness, to robbery and murder; while, in the face of earth and heaven, our senators assembled to sanctify the practice. Our brandy has brutalized or extirpated the aborigines of the western continent; and we have hired by thousands, the survivors, to the task of bloodshed. On an impartial examination, it will be found, that the guilt and infamy of this practice, exceed by a considerable degree, that of any other species of crimes recorded in history. It is far worse than even the piracies of the Algerines, or the African slave trade; because, though the two latter have cost millions of lives, yet plunder, not assassination, is the ultimate object of pursuit; whereas a plan, for exciting the Indians to extirpate the people of the United States, holds out no temptation, either of conquest or of spoil; and can arise only from a genuine monarchical and parliamentary thirst for the blood of republicans.

Our North-American colonies, including the Thirteen United States, formed a pretence for long and bloody wars, and for an expenditure of two hundred and eighty millions sterling.† We still retain Canada at an immense annual

* On the 6th of February, 1792.

† History of the Public Revenue, part III. chap. 2.

charge, that shall be hereafter specified. The money is wrested from us by an excise, which revels in the destruction of manufactures, and the beggary of ten thousand honest families. From the province itself, we never raised, nor hope to raise, a shilling of effective revenue; and the chief reason why its inhabitants endure our dominion for a month longer, is to secure the money that we spend among them. The British commissioners of public accounts, in their fifteenth report, state the following particulars. The amount of *etc.* for 1784, in the ports of Quebec, of Halifax, of Newfoundland, and St. John's, was five hundred and sixty-three pounds sterling; the expences of collection and incidents, one thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight pounds. The charges thus exceeded the income by *seven hundred and twenty-five pounds*. This is a summary of their detail. There seems to have been a mistake, perhaps by the printer, in casting up the figures to the extent of fifty-seven pounds. This trifling circumstance is only mentioned to ward off a charge of mis-quotation.

The mode of conducting our war against America, corresponded with the justice of our cause. At the burning of Fairfield in Connecticut, "a sucking infant was plundered of part of its cloathing, while the bayonet was presented to the breast of its mother.*" At Connecticut Farms, in the state of New-York, Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of a presbyterian clergyman, was shot dead, by a musket, levelled at *her*, through the window of a room, in which she was sitting with her children. Permission was granted to remove her body, and then the house itself was reduced to ashes.† We have at least five or ten thousand authentic anecdotes of the same kind. The Jersey, a British prison-ship, at New-York, will be long remembered in the United States. It is affirmed, on as good evidence as the nature of the subject will admit, that during the last six years of the war, eleven thousand American prisoners died of

* Ramsay's History of the American Revolution, vol. ii. chap. 17.

† Ibid. chap. 20.

hunger, and every sort of bad treatment, aboard of that single vessel. For some time after the war ended heaps of their bones lay whitening in the sun, on the shores of Long Island. When the illustrious commander at West-Point deserted to Clinton, nothing could be more *becoming the service*, than his instant promotion to the rank of a British brigadier-general. Philips, and other British officers, at once adopted, as their associate and their confidant, this prodigy of Connecticut. England is fond of comparing herself to ancient Rome; and, in perfidy and barbarity, she has been a most successful imitator. But she has neither exerted the inflexible intrepidity, the profound wisdom, nor the dignified pride of a primitive Roman. Fabius or Marcellus durst not have promoted a Numidian deserter to the command of a legion; nor would such a person have been suffered, like Arnold, to challenge and fight a senator for the exercise of his duty.

The peninsula within the Ganges, is the grand scene, where the genius of British *supremacy* displays its meridian splendour. Culloden, Glencoe, and Darien, the British famine of four years, Burgoyne's tomahawks, Tarleton's quarters, the Jersey prison-ship, and the extirpation of six hundred and sixteen thousand Irish men, women, and children, dwindle from a comparison.

"The civil wars, to which our violent desire of creating nabobs gave rise, were attended with tragical events. Bengal was depopulated by every species of public distress. In the space of *six* years, half the great cities of this opulent kingdom were rendered desolate; the most fertile fields in the world lay waste; and FIVE MILLIONS of harmless and industrious people were either expelled or destroyed. Want of foresight became more fatal than innate barbarism; and men found themselves wading through *blood* and *ruin*, when their only object was *spoil*.* This book was published in 1772." The author, a Scots officer, returned to India *after*

* Dow's History of Hindostan, vol. iii. p. 70.

its publication. His return to Bengal proves that the accusation here advanced was of *notorious* authenticity, and that Colonel Dow was prepared to support it, at the point of his sword.

On the 5th of June, 1792, Mr. Francis said, in the house of commons, that the Bengal newspapers were perpetually full of advertisements, for the sale of lands, seized *for want of due payment of revenue.* He held in his hand two of these advertisements; the one announced the sale of *seventeen* villages, and the other, a sale of *forty-two.* John Bonner may, perhaps, live to advertise Falkirk or Musselburgh for the arrears of a malt-excise. Mr. Francis quoted some minutes of Lord Cornwallis to the same effect. One of these, dated the 18th of September, 1789, was in these remarkable words. "I can safely affirm, that *one-third* of the Company's territory in Hindostan is now a JUNGLE, INHABITED BY WILD BEASTS."

In 1785, the British East India company governed two hundred and eighty-one thousand, four hundred and twelve square miles of territory; a space equal to twice the area of the whole republic of France, which is known to comprehend *twenty-seven millions* of people. The writers on this subject frequently remark, that large provinces of Hindostan, were *formerly* cultivated like a garden. The Hindoos themselves, are, perhaps, the most abstemious of mankind. Their subsistence requires but a trifling quantity of food, compared with that of any race of people in Europe. From the pacific temper of the natives, they had, for the most part, but few wars. Agriculture and manufactures had arrived at a high degree of perfection. From these important and combined causes the population of India must have been prodigious. But, if we suppose that it was only in proportion to that of France, and the supposition is perfectly reasonable, the dominions of the East-India company must, before the commencement of British conquests, have contained *fifty-four millions* of inhabitants; and from various circumstances

cumstances that have been stated, this computation is certainly not overcharged. For the sake of distinctness, we shall proceed by the help of cyphers.

Population previous to the year 1758; - - 54,000,000

Lord Cornwallis, in 1789, states, that one-third part of this country was, at that time, a jungle inhabited by wild beasts. For this jungle, deduct one-third of the ancient population - 18,000,000

Suppose that the remaining two-third parts of these provinces have lost *only* one half of the thirty-six millions of inhabitants, whom they contained, *before* their subjection to the British East-India Company. This one-half gives - - - - - 18,000,000

Deduct this from the original population	36,000,000
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Present number of inhabitants. - - - 18,000,000

Thus, in thirty-five years, that is, from 1758, to 1792, inclusive, there has been an uniform waste of people, under these mercantile sovereigns, at a rate of more than *one million* per annum; in whole, THIRTY-SIX MILLIONS. The premises, on which this calculation has been founded, are explicitly placed before the reader. As to their justice, he is competent to decide for himself.

THE END.

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